

## **Taking Control Of My Life**

It's hard to say really, where it all went wrong. Was it, as some might scoff, at the moment of my conception? Or was it as I grew up, and all my mother's fault, just as Freud would have you believe? Was it when I moved away? Or when I came back? When I had the high paying corporate job, or when I left all that for the opportunity to work with those less privileged than others? More likely, was it when I tried to figure out the meaning of life, of my life, and find the key to me? Probably it was at the time where I had self-developed to the point where I thought I had that "Eureka" moment, and I glimpsed the boundless possibilities and felt that light shining within me. Yep! That was probably the turning point, perhaps tipping point (in catastrophe theory, the value of the parameter in which the set of equilibria abruptly change). Not that we're really talking about catastrophe here. But definitely we're talking about change.

Things didn't quite turn out as I had planned. When does it ever? I don't mind that, but that the changes in my plan became so dramatic as to become immobilising, well I just didn't expect to feel that powerless after that fleeting time of feeling so powerful. I thought I had somehow become immune to being totally lost. Hah! That Life sure has the last laugh! I admit, it's all my own fault. I was looking for lessons in humility. I knew it was something I needed to work on. Boy did that lesson come with a kick in the pants. Be careful what you wish for.

Slowly my physical activities were being curtailed by various health problems, until almost all physical outlets were cut off to me. Even the simple, free pleasure of going for a walk became a difficulty. My new career was never secure, but the economic crash made it ever more precarious as the government funding that we depend upon was being hacked back at every budget. Each year was uncertain. One particular year I gave in to the fear that pervaded the office, and allowed it to dramatically affect my mental outlook, and possibly even my health. But that's when I started re-learning the lesson of "letting go". Control the things you can, and let go of those you can't. Being wise enough to know the difference is the key. So the following year I let go of the fear of losing the job and concentrated on doing it.

Then my health deteriorated. The work that I loved to do so much, that energised and fulfilled me started to become more difficult. I didn't have the energy to do it. I was sick frequently, and then more and more frequently, and finally I was out of work more than I was in for over a year. Now during this long deterioration, and the years long search for medical answers, I started to practice the art of letting go. Do what I can, and accept when I can't. That's supposed to be the right way, right? But if it's possible to overdo anything, then I am the over-achiever that can reach those heights. I think now I let go too much. I went into limbo. I was waiting! Always waiting. Waiting to feel better. Waiting for a consultant appointment. Waiting for a test result. Waiting for another appointment. Waiting to get back to work. Waiting to live.

I pulled back from too much of my life. I see it. Everyone close to me saw it. But I just couldn't see any alternative. I couldn't DO much. I physically couldn't take on any activity without getting fatigued. I wasn't allowed to work until I had answers. I couldn't get answers without going through test after test, consultant after consultant.

I took solace and sanctuary in my prized possession, my Kindle. I lost myself in book after book after book. I spent most of my time in my home, accompanied by my cats. I went every other day to meet a friend or two for lunch or tea. But for the most part I withdrew. Withdrew from people, withdrew from activity, withdrew from life.

But now I am gung-ho and ready to change all that. Now I want to re-engage on my terms. Now I want to fulfil my potential, whatever that may be. The catalyst for this change in focus and determination? A diagnosis! Finally I know what I'm dealing with. Fibromyalgia. A diagnosis I had heard of before and not really understood, sympathised about but not really empathised. Okay! I know what it is. I know from long history of cataloguing symptoms, capabilities, implications, cause and effect, I know how it affects me. What does it mean for me right now? Well it means I'm going to have to work part-time for the foreseeable future, probably for this year anyway. It means a continuation of the financial strain, but that I can adapt to, I can cut my cloth and figure out how to live within my new means. It also means that working part-time still leaves me isolated for a lot of the time.

So I've drawn up a new plan. I have become determined. I will work for my employer part-time and do what I can to contribute and feel valuable there. And I will work for myself to release and hone the skills that I've let lie dormant for some time. I will take on new activities to get me out and meeting people. I will write. I will treat it as a job. The creative urge has already returned, that burst of inspiration that carries me away at times. I have to manage it within my new energy capabilities, unlike in the past when I rode the crazy tide of sleepless nights while I created. I already have a few solid ideas that I have fleshed out, that I am determined to carry through. I will join an art class, something I've wanted to do for several years, ever since I sat in on a few sessions with a group I was leading. I hope to tap into the therapeutic benefits of paint, paper, brush and psyche. I want to find release in using my talents to heal myself. I'm going to walk, short walks slowly building to slightly longer walks. I'm going to get healthy, fit, eat right, thing right, do when I can, and rest when I need. I am going to take back my life. Geronimo!