

## ONE DAY AT A TIME

### POST POLIO SYNDROME

I HAVE CHANGED MY LIFE A LOT TO DEAL WITH POST POLIO SYNDROME. I DON'T FEEL BETTER PHYSICALLY, THAT'S FOR SURE. THE PROBLEM IS, THE MORE I CHANGE, THE MORE ANXIOUS I BECOME. SOMETIMES I FEEL OUT OF CONTROL AND I KNOW THE ANXIETY JUST MAKES THINGS WORSE. THEY SAY IT'S NORMAL TO BE ANXIOUS WHEN YOU FEEL "OUT OF CONTROL". ANXIETY IS A BUILT-IN EMOTION. I'VE COME TO BELIEVE THAT THE "VALUE" OF ANXIETY IS TO MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING TO BE "IN CONTROL" WHEN THERE'S ACTUALLY NOTHING THAT YOU CAN DO. I HAVE BEEN CALLED A TYPE A PERSONALITY PERSON FOR MOST OF MY LIFE----CONSTANT ACTIVITY AND DOING FOR OTHERS TO PREVENT CRITICISM, IN THE HOPE THAT I WON'T BE REJECTED AND ABUSED TODAY AS WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN. WHEN POLIO SURVIVORS START DEALING WITH THE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF POST POLIO SYNDROME BY SLOWING DOWN, ASKING FOR HELP AND USING ASSISTIVE DEVICES—I FEEL VULNERABLE, FEARING REJECTION AND EXPERIENCE ANXIETY. ANXIETY TURNS ON BECAUSE I'VE DISCARDED THE BEHAVIORS I THOUGHT WERE PROTECTING ME. TODAY, POLIO SURVIVORS ARE NEVER ABUSED FOR CARING FOR THEMSELVES, OR EVEN FOR ASKING FOR HELP. BUT, OLD FEARS DIE HARD. ANXIETY IS ALL I CAN DO TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL LIKE I'M DOING SOMETHING TO PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST REJECTION AND FEELINGS OF FAILURE. I DO HOPE ALL MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS UNDERSTAND!!! WHAT ANXIETY REALLY IS DOING IS MAKING MY ENGINE RUN HARD AND FAST AND HELPING ME GO ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE... EXCEPT DOWNHILL. MY HEART AND MIND ARE RACING ABOUT THINGS I FEAR WILL HAPPEN. I BELIEVE ANXIETY CAN ACTUALLY BE HELPFUL. ANXIETY IS LIKE BUILT-IN BIOFEEDBACK, LETTING ME KNOW THAT I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK WITH WHAT I'M DOING OR NO LONGER CAN DO. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT ANXIETY HAS TRIGGERED MY DISCARDING MY TYPE A LIFESTYLE, BUT I STILL LIKE TO COOK 4 FRIENDS. IF I CAN TOLERATE THE ANXIETY, IT WILL BURN OUT. IF I LET ANXIETY TAKE OVER IT WILL BURN ME OUT, BOTH EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DEAL WITH POST-POLIO SYNDROME THAN SELF PITY.