

ONE DAY AT A TIME

AN OPEN LETTER

I AM WRITING THIS LETTER TO LET ALL MY FRIENDS KNOW THAT ENDURING THE JOURNEY OF **POST POLIO SYNDROME (PPS)** U MUST BELIEVE ME THERE IS A LIFE FAR BEYOND THE DIAGNOSIS! I WALK AND RIDE MY SCOOTER INTO THE CHALLENGES WITH A NEW LOVE OF LIFE. THAT IS SO EASY TO SAY, NOT SO EASY TO DO. I KNOW THIS PERSONALLY. EVERY DAY PRESENTS A HOST OF NEW CHALLENGES. HOW YOU CHOOSE TO DEAL WITH THEM, ALTHOUGH PERSONAL, AFFECTS THOSE AROUND YOU AS WELL. POST POLIO IS NOT A DEATH SENTENCE, BUT A RENEWAL OF CHANGE IN LIFE. I MYSELF HAVE BEEN IN DENIAL FOR SO LONG, BUT CAN NOT FIGHT IT ANY LONGER. I HAVE LOST TOO MUCH OF MY MOBILITY, THAT I MUST CHANGE MY LIFESTYLE, FOR WHATEVER TIME I HAVE LEFT.

MY STRENGTH, MY CHOICES, MY DETERMINATION WILL MAKE EACH AND EVERY DAY EITHER CLOUDY OR SUNNY. THE CHOICE IS MINE. MINE AND MINE ALONE.

WHEN I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH POST POLIO MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO, I THOUGHT EVERYTHING AROUND ME WOULD COME CRASHING DOWN. THE ONLY THINGS THAT DID COME CRASHING AROUND ME WERE MY SHORT TERM MEMORY, MY BALANCE, MY STRENGTH, AND MY ABILITY TO WALK DISTANCES. **WOW!** ONCE I REALIZED MY OVERALL HEALTH WAS BECOMING DEPLETED, I FELT A HUGE URGENCY TO FIND OUT HOW TO RE-BALANCE MY LIFESTYLE AS WELL AS RETHINK HOW I WAS DOING. MAKING THAT COMMITMENT TO CHANGE MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE WAS FAR FROM EASY. IT WAS JUST ABOUT AS CHALLENGING AS WAS ENDURING THE WEARING OF BRACES WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID. EVERY SINGLE DAY I HAD TO SLOW DOWN, TAKE BREAKS, AND NOT RUN WITH THE OTHER KIDS.

WHILE I CONTINUE TO ENJOY MANY OF MY FAVORITE THINGS, AND TAKING TRIPS IN MY VAN, (WHEN I HAVE GAS IN THE TANK), IT DOESN'T ESCAPE MY THOUGHTS THAT SOON I WILL HAVE TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO THEM AS WELL. THIS, HOWEVER, IS A BLESSED AWAKENING IN SO FAR AS WHEN I AM DOING THESE ACTIVITIES WITH PASSION, AND THE OVERWHELMING JOY THEY ARE BRINGING INTO MY LIFE, IT'S A RE-GIFTED AWAKENING I WOULDN'T TRADE FOR THE WORLD. THE CLARITY WHICH ONE IS GIVEN WHEN THE THOUGHT OR POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO RELEASE AN ENJOYMENT IS BROUGHT TO YOUR ATTENTION, THE JOY IN DOING THAT ACTIVITY

THEN BECOMES REDEFINED AND CHERISHED TEN FOLD INTO THE PRESENT MOMENT. LIFE IS ABOUT SO MANY THINGS. WHEN YOU MAKE THE COMMITMENT OF LIVING A TRULY FULL LIFE, AND IT IS BALANCED WITH THE ART OF ACCEPTANCE, WHILE SUBTLE CHANGES ARE BEING MADE WITHIN YOU AND AROUND YOU, YOU THEN HAVE YOUR MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE JOY OF LIVING TO ITS FULLEST. **THINK ABOUT THAT.**

YES, POST POLIO SYNDROME HAS CHANGED ME. YES, IT WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE ME. BUT MOST OF ALL, PPS HAS GIVEN ME PERMISSION TO LIVE LIFE TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, A CHANCE TO REFORM MY DAYS, RETHINK MY CHOICES, AND MOST OF ALL BE FLEXIBLE IN MY NEWLY GIVEN CHALLENGES. TO KNOW AND REALIZE THAT LIFE IN AND OF ITSELF IS A PARALYZING ARTWORK OF GRANDEUR AND BEAUTY U CAN THEN MOVE FORWARD INTO THE CONFINES OF POST POLIO WITH A SENSE OF PEACE AND ACCEPTANCE.

LIFE IS AS INFECTIOUS AS POLIO. WALK SLOWLY THROUGH LIFE, FEEL THE JOYS, THE PAINS, THE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES. FEEL LIFE THROUGH THE HARSHNESS OF MOMENTS AND GENTLENESS OF SITUATIONS. PPS CAN, WITH THE WRONG PERCEPTION, JOURNEY YOU TO WHERE STONES PARK THEIR UNSTABLE FOOTING YOUR PATH, AND USE THEIR WILL TO FALL AND DISABLE YOU IF YOU BELIEVE IT CAN. PPS CAN ALSO LIFT U INTO HEIGHTS OF ACUTE AWARENESS OF HOW BEAUTIFUL LIFE IS. THE KEY TO PPS FOR ME PERSONALLY, IS TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH IT. IT TAKES A LITTLE, I GIVE IN A LITTLE, AND THEN WE FIND AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE. OUR RELATIONSHIP IS THEN ONE OF PERSONAL GROWTH, RENEWED COMMITMENT TO LIVE LIFE WITH GUSTO, AND PERMISSION TO BE THE BEST I CAN BE, EVEN IF IT IS NOT WHAT I USED 2 B BLESS ME LORD, AMEN.

JACK BRIGGS