

## Education, Healthier Lifestyle & Continuing to Make a Difference are some of the Best Remedies for Chronic Illnesses

This article was published in the following Scient Open Access Journal:

Journal of Alzheimer's Parkinsonism & Dementia

**Received** December 12, 2017; **Accepted** March 09, 2018; **Published** March 16, 2018

**John M Baumann\***

University of Louisville, USA

No one is really prepared. No matter how aware a person is that they are very likely to have to deal with one, if not several, life-changing adversities, they inevitably still take us by surprise. I have had Parkinson's disease since 2002 when I was 41 years old. I did not cause this in any way, shape or form. But it really does not matter that I was not at fault. Whether you are at fault, another party is at fault, or no one is at fault does not really matter, you are where you are and have to move forward. You have to get passed the emotion and stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance).

**Education.** I recommend that you put a plan together including specific daily action steps. In order to come up with a plan that has the greatest chance of success, a substantial amount of education is required. Whether it is a chronic illness or, for that matter, the death of a loved one, financial bankruptcy, addiction, or any other life-changing adversity, there are a tremendous amount of resources available. You just need to get on your computer and do the work. There may be some conflicting data. Here is where national and local resources come into play.

**Healthier Lifestyle.** The next thing that I recommend is not the first thing that would come to mind. When you are dealing with a life-changing adversity, it will affect your health even more than it is already affected. Your immune system is stressed in the base case. The best thing that you can do is to adopt a healthier lifestyle. If you are anything like me, I always had the intention of doing this. Being diagnosed with Parkinson's, push me over the edge into the world of eating the right food, doing the right exercise, drinking the right amount of water, etc. You might even call this, though it is strange to say, a positive side of being diagnosed with some chronic illnesses. You, in essence, no longer have a choice if you want not only the highest quality of life possible but want to live as long as possible. Today, I am in the best shape of my life. I trimmed down from 215 to 170 and have a toned flat core. I would not have put in the work to become healthy had I not been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

**Make a difference.** The third remedy for a chronic illness is to make a difference. This can be anything. It is completely subjective. If you feel that you are making a difference, then you are. The beautiful thing about Parkinson's (there I go again) is that you know now that you are not going to live forever and you can prioritize what you do with your time differently. You can vocalize how much you love your family and friends. It may even prompt you to reconnect with someone from whom you have become estranged. Making a difference makes you feel that your life was worthwhile. What else could we possibly hope for?

*Citation: John M Baumann (2018). Education, Healthier Lifestyle & Continuing to Make a Difference are some of the Best Remedies for Chronic Illnesses*

\*Corresponding Author: John M Baumann,  
University of Louisville, USA, Tel: 502-262-3300,  
Email: [johndecidesuccess@gmail.com](mailto:johndecidesuccess@gmail.com)

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