

Endo... what? (Endometriosis – 4)



My world was normal until the day I realized that there was something growing inside me that had no cure. My adolescence was relatively peaceful: I was just the victim of many pimples, but not much more than that. There were crises in my life, but only existential ones. Pain was present mainly with platonic love, less understanding friends or more difficult subjects at school. I spent most of my time dancing and loving! I have always loved with intensity, and have given myself away without reservation.

One day, I got married. Then we had a son. We got divorced and my son stayed with me. During those turbulent times, I also discovered something that would change my life forever. My son was born by C-section and through that scar that binds us until today, my body decided to play tricks on me! The pain started shortly after my son was born, maybe a year after. I went to the doctor because of a small lump that caused significant pain during menstruation. I was happy when I left the doctor's office with an antibiotic in my hand and the apparent solution for that problem. I thought: "How great was that! I have nothing serious and it will all go away when I start taking my medication". I was so naïve... Stupidly naïve... so I waited for the problem to go away! The truth is, I let my physical pain to go side by side with the emotional pain caused by the loss of the family I had imagined, and for years, I couldn't get rid of neither. That small lump grew and caused unbearable pain!

I believe there are moments in life in which the pain becomes so overwhelming that we finally decide to put our fate (and life) in the doctors' hands, before it is too late. So I did just that. I sat down and told the doctor everything. I told her about the pain that was killing me inside, almost like knives in my stomach, over and over again, and also about my fear of surgeries. According to the doctor, I probably had a hernia, but she told me my problem needed further observation. Even though I was scared of a probable surgery, I decided not to give up and believed that this time, things would be different. So I moved on and spent most of my time focused on myself, my family and the medical diagnosis.

During an ultrasound, I was told that I could have Endometriosis. I did not know what that was, but I still thought I would be OK with antibiotics! I got home and sat in front of the computer. I was sure I could find more information about the disease on the Internet. Unfortunately, I found out that the main symptom was pain and that there was no cure! At that moment, I asked myself: "Why me?" Not that I would

wish that on anyone, but as any human being would do, I asked myself what I had done to deserve this.

The next few days were characterized by pain, emotional conflict and medical exams. And all of a sudden, Endometriosis had invaded my life! I was angry, cried a lot and realized that my life had to change, especially the way I would have to face life and my body from that moment on. My life was a living hell during those months! The incapacitating pain prevented me from walking, smiling and even getting out of bed. I was living on painkillers, I stopped accepting invitations to go out and have fun, sex was simply non-existent and my life turned upside down! Something was going on inside me that I did not understand and nobody could really explain where it came from and why.

I was diagnosed with deep Endometriosis in my C-section scar tissue and in the rectovaginal septum. On October 11, 2013 I had a laparoscopy. I was obviously nervous and the pre-surgery process was also very aggressive! But when I woke up from the 4-hour surgery, I decided to come to terms with myself and with the disease. A 10-centimetre nodule was taken from me! In fact, my doctor still has the picture in her cell phone, as it was, in her words, "one of the biggest she had ever seen!"

I knew I would have to find a way to cope with Endometriosis, otherwise I would be miserable for the rest of my life, and that was something I obviously did not want for myself. Now, instead of a lump in my belly, I have a hole. But the truth is, I have also made peace with my belly and look at it as a warrior that is part of me and that has been winning battles... and who knows, one day we may actually win this war! I have been focused on a cure, and have been trying to transmit this attitude and way of life to a lot of women who talk to me about the disease, their infertility and their fears. We share a hard background and that is why we need to stick together and find solutions that help us live each day with a smile.

My life has changed! Exercise has become an important part of my daily routine again and even though I was very attentive regarding what I ate, now I am even more cautious! I believe in alternative therapies and have been resorting to Reiki and positive thinking. I have been getting to know the rhythm of my body, trying to channel my energies into minimizing symptoms and I feel things are flowing much better now. Endometriosis has changed my life, but it also alerted me to the fact that we need to like ourselves and respect our body!

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