

@Momentum



Resilience, right on time

Vicky Uhland has written an excellent article on resilience (“[The resilience factor](#),” Winter 2016-17). Generally, I have been able to bounce back from life’s trials without too much trouble. I had polio at 6, my first major MS attack in 1974, was diagnosed in 1995, and had cancer in 2005; that covers the highlights of my illnesses. Being extremely blessed for reasons I do not know, I am still able to walk, drive and take care of myself. My wife died in December 2015, however, and that is a crowning blow that has been really tough on top of everything else. Uhland’s article is a great encouragement and I thank her for it. Most articles seem to come out after I have solved my problem. This one is right on time.

George Rolfes, Ohio

Connected through coloring

I always look forward to each issue of **Momentum** and read it from cover to cover. I was particularly drawn to the article on resilience featuring Dawnia Baynes, as I tend to have that same attitude. I was particularly inspired when I noticed the picture that she was coloring was the first one I chose when I started coloring, too!

Peggy Beatty, Arizona

Stretching for spasticity

Lori De Milto’s Winter 2016-17 article, “[Controlling spasticity](#),” provided an excellent layperson’s understanding of this medical term and what it means to someone with MS.

Before my diagnosis in December 2014, not realizing that those symptoms were part of this neurological condition, I had purchased an inversion table to help me stretch out my leg muscles in the morning. I kept myself in an upside-down position for short periods of time,

which has now proven to be very effective for me in providing the stretching exercises which the author briefly mentions as one means of counteracting the debilitating effects of MS.

Nathan Grant, Florida

Let's hear it! Share your thoughts and comments about this issue's stories.

- Tag your thoughts on **Twitter** [@MSsociety](#) using #Momentum.
- Like and comment on our page on [Facebook](#).
- Email editor@nmss.org.
- Or send mail to **Momentum** Editor, National MS Society, 900 S. Broadway, Suite 200, Denver, Colorado, 80209. Letters to the editor must include your name and a way for our staff to contact you. Letters should be no more than 100 words and may be edited.

Editor's note: We're so glad to hear that this method of stretching has helped with your spasticity. Other readers should check with their physicians before using an inversion table, as it is not advised for people with some health conditions.

A timely help

Well, you've done it again! Previously, I hadn't given spasticity much thought, but your article in the Winter issue of **Momentum** has educated me. I had a similar experience regarding walking aids several months back, and I was educated on that subject also. Thank you for your wonderful articles that are so informative.

Marie Powers, Illinois

Thanks, Mr. Dowd

I've never commented on a story from any magazine before, but after reading about the [generosity of Ed Dowd](#), my heart felt compelled to say a few words of thanks.

I was diagnosed in October 2003 at age 21. The timing couldn't have been much worse because I was just starting my career. I was given little hope from the medical professionals, but had great family support and, of course, my youth. After some rehabilitation, I returned to full-time employment in April 2010. It broke my heart when, in 2014, I had to take a medical leave, not just once but twice. I fought with everything I had to regain my health and my employment. I returned to my job in January 2015, but it was just too much for my body. I took my final medical leave in February 2015 and was terminated later that year.

As I read the story of Ed Dowd, there were a few things that stood out. These include the progressive path he went through, from cane to crutches to wheelchair, as well as his eventual need to slow down from 12-hour working days, seven days a week. I am grateful for

his donation to the Society, for I may need support in the future through the program. I may have lost my youth, but I have not lost hope. Please share my thanks with Mr. Dowd.

Brad Yeagle, Pennsylvania

The lessons of MS

I was so glad to see Stephen Kamnetz's positive attitude about his MS in "[The upside of MS](#)" (Winter 2016-17). Until my diagnosis in 1996, I felt like I was on top of the world. I was providing security and was a firefighter/EMT for a chemical company. When I was among nearly 1,500 people who were laid off, the change was almost welcome, as by then I had extreme heat sensitivity and visual problems. I had always gravitated to the "high-risk employment fields," but those fields were less of an option now.

Luckily for me, my husband has exceptional benefits, which allowed me to pursue even better, less stressful employment options. I now work for an engineering and construction management company writing contracts and obtaining licenses. Since my diagnosis, I have also tried indoor rock climbing and kayaking, which I absolutely love. I returned to bicycling, and to the gym. I do tire more easily and experience spasticity at times, but like Stephen, I try to live each day as if it were my last. Sure, there are a lot of things I can no longer do but the things I can do, I love. Sometimes, getting a diagnosis like MS makes us appreciate the simpler things in life.

Gailynne Ferguson, Pennsylvania