

## **Sarah Marshall - M.E. and ME**

Five years with M.E. ended my career in IT. Having had my life as I had known it taken away from me, I embarked upon on a journey of discovery about why I became ill, what was preventing me from recovering my health, and how to turn that around.

### **What is M.E./Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?**

M.E. (Myalgic Encephalopathy)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (C.F.S.) is an often confusing and misunderstood illness. As we explain at The Optimum Health Clinic in our booklet 'M.E. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' the main diagnosis definition used, which most researchers use in studies, defines M.E./C.F.S. as "unexplained, persistent or relapsing fatigue" for six months or more (Fukuda definition of C.F.S. 1994).

M.E./C.F.S. in the traditional medical model does not have a clear explanation of what is wrong, or what is happening, and unlike most illness it has a diagnosis of exclusion – everything else is ruled out with M.E./C.F.S. being the only explanation left.

### **My Own Journey**

My journey was often confusing, frightening and lonely. The only information I could find regarding M.E was how to manage it, live with it, or how bad life with M.E. could be. I didn't find anything at the time that said how you could recover, or what was actually going on with my body. I saw 13 GPs (partly because I had to move location twice due to increasing illness) who ranged from very supportive, but were as confused as I was, to dismissive and disbelieving that I was ill at all.

I eventually fully recovered and I trained in many of the techniques that worked for me to share the benefit of what I had learnt, and to support others through their own journey.

### **Overview of my Presentation**

As M.E./C.F.S. is a complex and confusing illness, and because of the way to work with clients with this condition overlaps in so many ways to working with other conditions, I aim to present a general overview of how M.E./C.F.S can effect a person and the areas that EFT can be used to help the client to work through the issues that can be presented as part of the M.E./C.F.S spectrum.

My presentation will include sharing what is appropriate from my own experience of recovering fully from M.E and my experience of working with many others through the different stages of the condition to demonstrate the theory, and how EFT can be used as part of an integrated approach with other healing modalities.

### **One Client's Experience of EFT**

One of my clients, Joy, shared her story in an interview with Alex Howard of The Optimum Health Clinic. They have kindly given their permission for excerpts of the interview transcript to be reproduced. My comments are in blue.

Joy contacted The Optimum Health Clinic, where I work as a practitioner in addition to working independently, on the recommendation of a friend that had also had M.E. Joy had been referred to me as she had experienced a lot of trauma in addition to her physical symptoms - previous to contacting the clinic she had not considered working with the emotional or cognitive aspect of M.E. At this point in the interview Joy had explained her history and how she found out about the clinic. We pick up the interview where Joy starts working with me.

**Alex:** *The first time you spoke to Sarah, it sounds like it would have been quite a radical shift in your thinking because obviously Sarah working on the Psychology side talking about that*

being a major factor in your physical symptoms, what did you feel like when you first spoke to her?

**Joy:** I thought, I don't believe this, it is not psychological, this is medical, there is something wrong with my body, but it was a real eye opener because on the paper I had to fill in, I had to write all the things that had happened in the previous 10 years. When I read that and I showed my husband, and he actually cried when he read that and said, no wonder you have been ill, he said anybody would feel utterly exhausted. When Sarah started talking to me about all these things and about my mum, our relationship had always been quite difficult in that I always felt that I never came up to expectations, even at my age ([Sarah - Joy was 66 when we started working together](#)), which just sounds ridiculous now but I do, Sarah helped me through so much of that.

My husband said I went in our back bedroom to speak to Sarah and I felt so poorly and I was really anxious about speaking to her and it was all different, what is she going to say?, where is this going? And she said when she started to talk to me about ME and how she had been ([Sarah - regarding my own illness](#)), I can't tell you how it was just incredible to speak to somebody. She said something that I have never forgotten, she said I guarantee when you wake up in the morning, you open your eyes and say to yourself 'Oh no I have got to do another day, I have got to get up, I have got to do another day, where do I hurt today?', which part of my body aches?'

My recollection is slightly different to Joy's. We cannot guarantee we know what someone else is thinking, and I wouldn't presume to do so. I had at this point read Joy's comprehensive pre-treatment questionnaire, which we ask all clients to complete, and had asked her a number of questions. And with my experience and what I already knew about Joy I could make an intuitive guess at some of her cognitive patterns.

**Alex:** You had got so used to thinking in that way it almost becomes programmed into you

**Joy:** It is, I did feel like that every morning and I really cried then and I said I have never said that to anybody because that sounds so wicked and awful to say that when people are dying and children have got cancer, how wicked to say you didn't want to get up, but that was so amazing to be able to be absolutely honest with her. It was very bizarre because I spoke to her down the phone so I was telling all my inner most thoughts to this lady, I had no idea who she was and then she was telling me these amazing things back, that it was ok to feel like that and I didn't have to feel guilty and it was perfectly understandable that I was reacting the way I did, and my husband said when I came out of that room after that hour he said I looked a different person. I feel even from that moment, I came out of that room thinking, I am going to get better, I really believe what she is saying, it all makes sense, this circle of stress and pain and stress and pain. For the first time since I have had this, I have spoken to somebody that knew exactly how I felt and it made sense, and it was incredible really.

**Alex:** I guess also you actually had some tools that you could use to actually then work with what is happening. It is one thing to understand that you will get better one day, but another to go – wow I actually have these tools that I can use. I am guessing some of the tools might have seemed a little bit unusual at the time? I am curious as to what that was like?

**Joy:** The EFT, because I had been in emotional turmoil and she said I just want you to sit and relax and do this chopping motion with your hand and then tap your head. I was thinking oh my gosh what have I got myself into, they are all crazy, because I had never heard of EFT ever.

**Alex:** That must have been very confusing, to go from an understanding to then being asked to tap on the head

**Joy:** Absolutely and I thought she sounds a sensible lady, I cant believe she is telling me to do this and it was amazing, she went through all the negative things, I had to keep stopping because I was very emotional and then go back to the positive and had to sit quietly. Then she said how do you feel, and I felt so relaxed, I suddenly thought my gosh this is so weird,

*obviously then on my own I tried to do it myself, and then about a week later it suddenly hit me, I thought my body is so tense, so uptight like a coiled spring all the time*

**Alex:** *You actually noticed what was really happening then*

**Joy:** *Yes I did, then I listened to your CD about being and peace and love - the Learn to Relax CDs.*

Joy goes on to explain how learning to relax was also key, in addition to using EFT and being consistent. We pick the interview back up at integrating what she was learning with me and working with another practitioner, Niki, on nutrition.

**Joy:** *I came to the conclusion, I thought if you think of your body as an engine, it was everything, my physical side and the emotional side was all in a mess really, and I felt between Sarah and Niki they sort of got it running back together again, that is how I can describe it.*

**Alex:** *I think it is also a great example of the integration of the 2 different levels because some people just work on the psychology side and some just on the nutrition and I think often it is very important to do both. When you can physically measure the manifestations of the stress state and anxiety and that kind of thing, but also do treatments on the physical side that reboot that and boost that back up again, it often makes the psychology work much easier to do because you have got a much stronger system in the first place.*

**Joy:** *That's right, as your body is beginning to heal from the stress factor, I imagine the nutritional side is able to work to heal what the medical side*

Joy closes her interview by explaining she went on to recover from M.E through being consistent and integrating EFT with other healing modalities. I wish to add that I have never met Joy - we worked exclusively over the phone.

*Interview reproduced from 'Secrets to Recovery: 12 Lessons in Healing M.E./C.F.S./ Fibromyalgia' by Alex Howard, Anna Duschinsky and Frances Goodall from The Optimum Health Clinic. To read the full interview, and others, it can be ordered for free (£2.99 p&p) from [www.freedomfromme.co.uk](http://www.freedomfromme.co.uk).*

**Sarah Marshall**  
**'Helping you to find the answer'**  
**AAMET Level 3 Practitioner and Trainer**  
**[www.raincastles.co.uk](http://www.raincastles.co.uk)**  
**01325 468587**