

*My Trip Back To Me.....How I Reclaimed My Health,
My Joy and Emotional Well-Being*

-Jennifer Lynn Bell

There is nothing better than being at peace with your decisions and your life. It doesn't mean you are perfect, have it all figured out, or never face challenges. But I have learned how powerful and impactful my thought life is. All it took was for me to be told by my doctor that if I didn't learn to control my emotions and stress, I would be setting myself up for more illness.

In December 2006, I passed out in my parent's home where I lived at the time. I was headed out to go meet a real estate agent who was helping me in my search to purchase a condominium. I had just driven up the street from home when I became dizzy. Being anemic, this was a familiar feeling. I knew my iron level was low, so I turned around and went back home to take my iron pills. On my way out of my den door, I was saying good bye to my father when I blacked out and fell back on the sofa. I was rushed to the hospital and told that if I had not gone any sooner, I would have possibly had a stroke or a more fatal outcome. My hemoglobin blood count was at a level 4, (the average level for a healthy woman is 12.0-15.5) I received a blood transfusion, blessed with 5 pints of someone else's blood.

After spending a week in the hospital, I consulted my My OB/Gyn, Dr. Felicia Dawson. Dr. Dawson had a candid conversation with me regarding my emotional stress. She asked me questions that I had never had a doctor ask me. I started crying for seemingly no reason when answering questions that I had no idea would conjure up emotions. It didn't help that my hormones during these years made me feel as though I was having PMS everyday! Dr. Dawson made it very clear that from her experience and research she felt strongly that my mental and emotional stress played a significant role in the existence and possibly the growth of fibroids. She explained how our bodies respond to the dis-ease we experience. Much of our dis-ease stems from how we deal with life's circumstances. While nutrition and heredity are also presumed contributors to the existence of uterine fibroids, Dr. Dawson expressed her concern that no matter what procedure I decided to have, I might possibly deal with other issues in my third chakra (lower abdominal or pelvic area of my body) if I did not resolve my emotional imbalance. She suggested a few books to read that might help me. With that information, she then explained my options for healing, including another myomectomy, UFE, or hysterectomy.

I was then scheduled for an MRI and consultation with Dr. John Lipman, MD, FSIR; a pioneer in the development of uterine fibroid embolization (UFE). While I knew I had uterine fibroids again, I did not know how large or how many. During my previous bout in 2001, I had a myomectomy, having 24 benign tumors removed from my uterus. This time, Dr. Lipman informed me that I had one fibroid the size of a cantaloupe and 8 located outside of my uterus just under my

ribcage. My initial reason for coming to see Dr. Lipman was because I was considering having a UFE procedure. However, after hearing his consultation I was told that the large tumor was so large that the UFE procedure would not be very effective and that my symptoms and health would not improve much.

So, I had a choice of either having another myomectomy or a hysterectomy. The myomectomy would remove the detectable fibroids, but with no certainty that all tumors would be removed, or that more would not grow yet. The hysterectomy would remove the uterus, the holding chamber of fibroids. Fibroids grow either inside or outside of the uterine walls. Removing the uterus and ovaries, if necessary, would eliminate any chance of developing more fibroids. While the exact cause of fibroids is yet known, there are attributing factors that research has discovered to what may contribute to their growth. Heredity, emotional and physical stress, as well as nutrition have all been factors suggested as contributors to the growth and symptoms of uterine fibroid tumors.

I wanted to avoid having a hysterectomy, and had spent the last two years attempting alternate methods in hopes of dissolving the fibroids. Due to the advanced progression of my tumors, no hormone therapy, nutritional adjustments, or holistic treatment helped my condition. As a matter of fact, I truly believe that my stress about my situation only assisted in the manifestation of more of them developing. I had to make a choice because the last two years of my life had been spent hemorrhaging an average of 25 days out of each month, running home and jumping right in the shower with bloody clothes on, or leaving work to go to the store to replace ruined pants . I was tired of the fatigue, moodiness, back pains, enlarged stomach, and the blood, blood, blood! And according to Dr. Lipman, my health was a concern because despite the blood transfusion, my anemia was still severe, the fibroids were affecting other organs, and I was a candidate for ovarian cancer.

So at the age of 41, in an effort to save my life and restore my health and sanity, I decided to have a hysterectomy.

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