

Support in LYME

for Families and Advocates



Janice Fairbairn

“Thank you for the fantastic support you gave me to help my husband heal and get well. I appreciate your insight and spiritual strength.”

Kim B.

“All these natural products and methods can sure be confusing, thanks for being someone I can talk to about it and get experience and knowledge from.”

Tamara A.

I missed you
Did you miss me? I
bet you did. See you
on Wednesday. I missed
you. Hope you will come
back before dinner.
Love,
Asher
MOMMY

I love you mommy. I have
been praying for you. I am
excited for you to feel
better.

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Janice Fairbairn

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To my new circle of Lyme friends from California to Canada to Texas - Thank you for being like-minded and encouraging!

To the many incredible warrior mommies I know who have shown me how to be a mighty advocate.

To my earthly father, the best example of a warrior advocate I know, who doesn't give up. Thank you for your research and immense knowledge to recover my family.

I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

(Psalm 27:13-14)

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Introduction

Depending on others isn't just hard for me, it's like kryptonite. The antitheses of the hardest things for me to do is to ask for help or to show my weakness. My parents did a great job of raising three girls to be independent and strong, almost to a fault.

This illness took not just my physical self and assurance of tomorrow (that was false to begin with), but it took my independence and strength. I have always been a pack mule, a rock, the strength in any storm. But who was my actual anchor? Was it my own strength or the Lord's? Is that why in the beginning of this trial I was hopelessly tossed about on the waves because the anchor in my own strength was not enough for the storm. I needed to remember my anchor in the Lord.

When I finally realized I had to let go of my independence and grasp the help that was being held out by my church community, family and friends, I was deeply rewarded. My mentor went from leader to best heart friend. She went from friendly sweet old lady to a grandma to my kids. God has grown beautiful new flowers of friendships and deepened roots on existing heart friends that helped me weather this storm.

Be honest with those around you, as honest as you possibly can. The rest you must be honest with the Lord as to not hold onto such toxic assets in your heart. Let go of the fear, the pain, the frustration, the confusion, the helplessness or it will fester and rot inside of you.

I hate the pain this is causing my kids and family. I despise that they have to watch me suffer, but you bring to mind the alternative and I am on my knees thanking you that it is me who gets to carry this burden. I am thankful that it is me who is suffering. For as long as it takes, let me carry this cross rather than for my husband or kids to suffer in it.

I wouldn't cast this upon even my worst enemy to hold and live. The suffering is too great to put upon even their bad deeds.

Thank you that I get to carry it. Thank you for sparing my family the anguish of having to live it, but only having to watch it.

Chapter 1 -To Spouse, Family Member, Friend

“As we pass through the land between, it is critical to recognize that not simply the hardship but also our reaction to the person we are in the hardship is forming us. With each discomfort we experience, our responses both reveal the person we are and set the trajectory for the person we are becoming. Whether we age with grace and poise or become bitter, resentful people is largely determined by our response to disappointment and the habits of response that often result.” Jeff Manion The Land Between

One of the patients I met at the Lyme clinic was a little girl, 14 years old and her mom from California. She had been sick for years and had been to 42 doctors. 42 doctors!! I thought my 12 was bad, but 42? What causes traditional medicine to be such a bad listener? I’ve asked many Lymies I’ve met and the common denominator is that doctors aren’t listening. People are not listening. Nobody believes them. Nobody understands.

I was shocked. Each of the doctors I saw also wanted to put me on antidepressants. There was no other medical explanation for why I wasn’t eating or feeling so bad and losing weight. I must have been creating the whole illness in my head. And then I keep learning each patient

experiences this with all of their doctors. For me this was the biggest surprise, I can come to terms with Lyme not being a well-known or popular illness, but to find out it is also unpopular and unknown in the medical world as well? That takes me and many other Lymies by storm.

Help your loved one navigate this and listen to them. Believe them. They need people around them that trust them and will help get doctors to listen, really listen.

Chapter 2 - Missing Out

I spent two semesters of college abroad, so upon my return, I was waiting tables in Chicago. Two young guys were trying to flirt and impress me. They were doing an impression of some characters that just made me look at them like they were crazy. They tried harder for a while using this technique to desperately get me to laugh or think them cool. It didn't work. Then a look passed between us that said "this girl is culturally clueless and these guys must be drunk on something."

You see, while I was gone from the country, I had missed the onset in our culture of two new characters that had hit like wildfire. I had missed the introduction of Beevis and Butthead. So, that day I thought those two guys were the crazy ones, they probably for the life of them couldn't figure out why I didn't know what they were doing and why it wasn't funny. Everybody knew Beevis and Butthead right? Wrong.



My husband and I began dating and attending his church and went through the welcome class there. The welcome class introduces you to the church and its doctrine, etc. Then I got a job and moved to NY for 9 months. Upon my return after 9/11, we got married and

ended up staying in KS. That first Christmas, we were invited to a Christmas party of the newly married Sunday School class in the same church and one of the couples we had met in the welcome class came walking in with a baby. I had never seen them pregnant and they had a baby?



What does it mean to miss a year or two? How do you adjust to the holes that exist in your timelines when you check back in? How do you keep from feeling like you are missing out, not getting it?

I like being off the beat and path. My faith walk is so far out of bounds and that is fine with me, but culturally and relationally I am completely out of touch after losing 1 ½ years to Lyme. I don't want to be in the "know" culturally, but it still feels weird to not have a clue who was playing in or who won the Super Bowl two years in a row. I don't know who won Dancing with the Stars; I don't know the parent's names at school (let alone the kid's names). I came "back" and walked into church and everything looks different. We got a "revamp" look and new carpet and paint and a new logo and new coffee bar and it looks like a different place. I don't feel at "home" right away.

Missing out is a hard place to be. The illness is one thing, but to feel left out and missing out no one likes that. How can you keep your loved one plugged in spiritually

and relationally and culturally? It's difficult, because some of that stuff seems so insignificant when your loved one is fighting for their life. On the other hand, it is great to get one's mind off such heavy things.

Even though it was difficult for me, plugging into a bible study group helped me connect with people and be in relationship.....