



Bergen ME/CFS-FM Support Group Newsletter

Meeting Report

A winter storm made cancelling the meeting necessary. The sun did appear by meeting time, but some of us were unable to dig out; some were still digging out, or were so wiped from doing so that it was decided that cancelling would be the best decision. An email notice was sent and the Ridgewood Y was notified. Hopefully each of you received the message. If anyone did venture out, we apologize for not being able to reach you. For future reference, if a change of meeting is necessary, an email will be sent.

The leadership team hopes that each of you had a very special season embracing your holiday and its meaning.

In the News – Living with Chronic Illness

Monday, October 27, 2008 <http://www.capessa.com/members/BlogActions.aspx?q=441857&m=2480761>

Catherine Morgan is the mother of two, a nurse, and a freelance writer. She happily resides in sunny Florida, not far from the ocean, with her teenage son and daughter. She's been writing and blogging "Health and Wellness" for several years, and has enjoyed sharing useful information on healthy living, dieting, healthcare, and empowerment to many readers. Catherine's favorite place to write and find inspiration is sitting on the beach, listening to the waves hit the shore, and smelling the sea air.

She brings a unique perspective to her writing, having been both a health professional and a patient with chronic illness. She knows that medical problems don't have to pull you down, or define who you are. All adversity in life is an opportunity for growth; we just need to make a choice to see it.

Living Well With Chronic Illness - Redefining Yourself

By Catherine Morgan

This issue is so important, and that is because; When you suffer from chronic illness, although you are being treated (even successfully), going back to your former life before you were sick may be impossible. I hear this all the time from others suffering with CFS and FM, and I am certain it holds true for many others suffering with chronic disease as well. The biggest problem is that many of us "define" ourselves through our work, or what we do for a living. Quite frankly, this is a bad idea even if you are a healthy person. None of us "are" our work. Our work is not **who we are**, it's simply **what we do**. But, we all know it doesn't always feel that way, especially when out of nowhere, we are unable to **do what we do**.

So...What do you do, when this happens to you? Well, it's not so different than when a stay at home mom sees her last child off to college. They call it "**Empty Nest Syndrome**" for her, and it can be quite devastating for a women who has devoted her life, up until then (usually at least 18 years or more), to being the best mom she could be, and doing it as a career. Now she is left with no-one to mother, and she loses her sense of "self". At this point, she can choose to accept her new life and find new and exciting things to do with herself (maybe go back to school, get back into a career, take up a hobby, or

maybe travel), or she can choose to be sad and depressed and feel like her life is over because she has no-one left to take care of. It's not the same as losing your identity due to illness, but it is an example of seeing your life (or identity), as half full or half empty.

Feeling sorry for yourself can be a full time job, but it's a job that doesn't benefit you in any way....so just take it on a part-time basis. Then on the days you're not working hard at that job, focus on finding something to do with your life that can benefit you.

Step 1 - Make a plan. Take some time to write a list of all the things you can do in your current condition (not just work things; hobbies, school, etc)....even if it is something you don't know how to do. Write down some "dream" ideas too.

This isn't something you do in one day...do it over days or even weeks. Open your thoughts to ideas you may not have ever even considered before...this is the first step in "re-making" yourself.

Step 2 - Believe in yourself. Start believing it is possible for you to do one or more of these things. Take your pessimistic cap off for a little bit, and let yourself "feel" the possibilities.....see it in your minds-eye.

Now, it's o.k. if you don't "feel" it right away, it's going to take some time. The important thing is, to not let yourself feel hopeless; there are always possibilities out there. It's just that many times we can't see these opportunities, because we live in a box that we think we can never escape from. Just remember...This happens to everyone, not just you. So just do yourself a favor, and allow yourself to believe that you can escape if you want to.

Even though it's just two steps, doing them right takes time. This can be a very long process, so don't be too hard on yourself. *It's taken me years, and I am still only in the middle of the process.* But, you do need to start the process...you can't reach your dreams or your potential, if you don't open yourself up to the possibility.

Redefining Yourself From Healthy and Successful to Successfully Living with a Chronic Illness — by Catherine Morgan (cross posted at [Living With Chronic Fatigue Syndrome](#))

Tax Time

It is very early to be mentioning taxes. However, we are sharing a note from our parent organization, NJCFSA. H&R Block will donate \$25 to the NJCFSA for each NEW client who uses the bottom portion of the attached form. See below.

If the flyer format has become jumbled, it can also be found in PDF format at the NJCFSA website <http://www.njcfsa.org>.

The NJCFSA and the Bergen ME/CFS/FM support group do not necessarily endorse this sponsor, but are very grateful for their commitment to charitable contributions.

Next Meeting

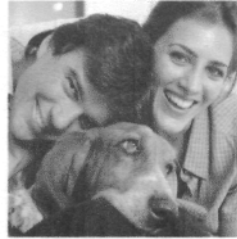
The next meeting will be Sunday January 18th from 2-4 PM at the Ridgewood YMCA. It will be an open discussion meeting.

This newsletter is intended for CFS & FM patients in the area of this support group. The purpose is to share information and support. If you have questions about meetings please contact: Pat LaRosa at pat.njcfsa@larosas.net, Nancy Visocki at ngv.njcfsa@verizon.net, Judy Machacek at judymachacek@msn.com or leave a voice message at the NJCFSA HelpLine 888-835-3677 during business hours.

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*Your organization is eligible to receive \$25.00 for each new client referred to a participating U.S. H&R Block office when that person pays for preparation of an original personal income tax return between 01/01/09 and 11/01/09. An eligible tax form includes: 1040,10-40-A and 10-40-EZ. A new client means a person who did not have his/her 2007 taxes prepared by H&R Block. Referral form must be presented prior to completion of initial tax office interview. Amended returns do not qualify and H&R Block employees are not eligible. Allow approximately 8 weeks after May 1, 2009 and/or November 1, 2009 for delivery of check. Offer may not be combined with any other referral program or any coupon or discount offer. ©2008 H&R Block Services, Inc..