

# BEATING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Empowering Stories of Self-Healing and Thriving**

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& PAIGE NEWSOME

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**To my loved ones,**

This book reveals the transformative path of my MS journey and daily dedication required for a healthy life. I'm taking care of myself, so you don't have to.

**To the multiple sclerosis community,**

May our stories empower and inspire, fostering understanding, compassion, and progress. Together, let's navigate the challenges of this journey, knowing that we are never alone.

With love and deepest admiration,  
Agota Nawroth

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the creation and completion of this book.

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I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the remarkable individuals who graciously shared their heartbreaking stories for this book. Your bravery in opening up about your journeys will undoubtedly resonate with others who find solace and strength in knowing they are not alone. I am honored to have had the opportunity to give voice to your stories and express my deepest appreciation for your invaluable contribution.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to my followers, readers, and supporters. Your enthusiasm, feedback, and reviews inspire me to continue sharing my story and the knowledge I've acquired along the way with the world, raising awareness about diseases that can be prevented.

To all those mentioned above and the countless others who have contributed in various ways, your presence in my life has made this book a reality. Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey.

With heartfelt appreciation,  
Agota Nawroth

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Many individuals are searching for a diagnosis while struggling with various symptoms. For those of us already diagnosed, having answers can be a relief but also adds a lifelong burden. At times, this weight can feel overwhelming. I wish a book like this had been available when I was first diagnosed four years ago. It would have made a world of difference. Back then, I wouldn't have felt so alone and lost. I wouldn't have had to search through numerous books to connect the dots. My goal with this book is to provide you answers and give you practical guidance to regain control and steer your life back on track.

The stories in this book showcase the remarkable potential within us as human beings. We can heal our minds and bodies, making full recoveries from autoimmune diseases when we cultivate the right mindset and well-being practices. I haven't encountered anyone who thrives with a pessimistic outlook. Our minds are incredibly powerful. It's crucial to remember that the path to healing often begins there. While change can be a challenge, it's a necessary step for those seeking a healthier life.

So, who is this book for? It's not exclusively for people with MS. This book is filled with ideas to improve the lives of anyone, diagnosed or not, who is facing symptoms. Each chapter is a glimpse into someone's life, flourishing despite the diagnosis. My hope is that you'll discover a story or two that resonate with you. Please share this book, help us spread the message, and raise awareness about this complex condition. It doesn't have to lead to life in a wheelchair.

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#### Final Note

“Wellness is the complete integration of body, mind, and spirit – the realization that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an effect on our state of well-being.”

– *Greg Anderson*

## DISCLAIMER

The stories shared in this book provide personal perspectives and experiences, reflecting individual accounts. These stories should not be construed as professional medical advice or recommendations.

The author and publisher have made reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the stories. However, due to the subjective nature of personal accounts and the uniqueness of each individual's circumstances, the stories may not apply to or accurately represent everyone's experiences. The information and opinions expressed in this book are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is essential to consult with a qualified healthcare professional before making any decisions or taking any actions based on the information or stories provided in this book.

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## Story by **BILJANA**

Diagnosed in 2013

Currently 46 years old

Lives in Australia (from Serbia)

It was January of 2013. I awoke in the morning, stood up from bed, and fell to the floor. I had no idea what was happening to me. All feeling had left my leg. It was a living nightmare. I was terrified. At the time of the “incident”, I was a single mother, managing two teenage boys. I was overrun with stress, working long hours to ensure the boys had everything they needed (school supplies, soccer gear, food, clothes). Not to mention, allotting plenty of time to talk with them about life since they were growing up. Puberty with two boys is hard.

Somehow, I managed to stand up and get myself to the hospital, where they kept me for an entire month. It was easily the worst month of my life.

At the time, we lived in Serbia. When I was eighteen, we came to Serbia during the war in the Balkans to escape Croatia, giving me dual citizenship in both Serbia and Croatia. I had children from my first

marriage. Due to many problems and stress, the marriage ended after fifteen years. The following seven years, the children and I lived alone. The healthcare system in Serbia is free, making the wait to see a specialist (in my case, a neurologist) very long. The one exception being a trip to the hospital due to a relapse. Then, you will be admitted immediately to receive the appropriate therapy with corticosteroids. This was my case. I'm not sure how it is in other countries, but in Serbia, the official diagnosis of MS comes only with the second relapse. After two lumbar punctures, three MRIs, too many corticosteroids to count, and medications—the doctors STILL didn't have a clear answer. When I was discharged from the hospital, they left me with the diagnosis of “possible multiple sclerosis (MS)”.

I felt helpless. Later, I learned what I suffered from that January morning was my first relapse. My family came to visit me everyday in the hospital, but I was angry—angry about life, my body, everything. I could not accept the fact there was nothing I could do to fix my situation. Before the nightmare in January, I was happy, smiling, and full of life. I enjoyed everything, and everything made me happy. Suddenly, life STOPPED.

After my incident, I spent two weeks in a medical spa (similar to rehab for multiple sclerosis patients). It's a sulfur spa. They lifted me up onto my feet where I could feel my legs again, and I began walking normally.

In April of the same year, I experienced problems with my shoulder, giving me the final diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. During this month, I was accepted to be part of a study for a new MS drug. Bad decision. Nineteen months I just want to forget. Every second day, I gave myself an injection. Once a week, I went to the hospital for an infusion. I felt like I was on an emotional rollercoaster or stuck in a bad movie. Pain, depression, and anger continued to pile on. Without the love and support from my family and kids, I don't know if I would have survived.

During the case study for this experimental medicine, I had access to the Clinical Center of Serbia. When I finished the study, they offered me the medication Rebif, which I refused on my own accord. I take full responsibility for that decision. I just couldn't do it anymore. As you may already know, these medications were used to treat multiple sclerosis when the disease was newly discovered. In underdeveloped countries, they are already outdated, and a new generation of medication is dispersed. In my opinion, they are all the same.

Around that time, I married my current husband who is from the same

area as me in Croatia. We've known each other since childhood. He lived and worked in Australia. He was divorced, just like me. We started our life together in Serbia. Of course he knew everything about me and my condition, which he didn't mind at all. He always supports me in everything—a wind at my back.

We decided to go to Australia, applying for a partner visa to get Australian citizenship. A lot of paperwork and examinations were involved, including a medical examination. It never occurred to me not to disclose my MS. It is part of who I am. Announcing it led to a three-year struggle for citizenship. In the end, they deported me with the reasoning that I would be a big financial loss to their healthcare system. They estimated I would cost them around \$700,000 to treat my multiple sclerosis for the duration of my life, even though I was not taking medication.

We complained to all parties, last being the tribunal. The lawyer informed us we could appeal the decision, but a positive outcome would not be guaranteed. The Australian government is ruthless when incurable diseases are in question. I was disappointed. Not because of multiple sclerosis, but as a human being. I did not choose to have MS— it's part of me now. I can't change that. But the way they treat people with this disease is very dehumanizing. I couldn't stand anymore disappointment. We were forced to pack up and return to Serbia. The right to apply for a tourist visa was taken away from me for three years. Then came corona. After three years, I reapplied and was finally granted a tourist visa. During that time, I was pretty healthy. No major problems, no medication, no relapse.

The last MRI I received was in 2016, during the health examinations related to the visa. I still don't know what the findings were. I have not seen a neurologist in seven years, and I hope to keep it that way.

I think I had multiple sclerosis long before the diagnosis, possibly five years prior. I constantly experienced headaches and fatigue, but justified that it was from being overworked, along with other problems. The first relapse that stole my lower body from me was just the result of wear and tear from the previous years.

Because of everything I'd been through, it took me two years to fully accept that I have multiple sclerosis. Since then, she and I have become BEST friends!

I decided to change everything. It took time and patience, but it was

worth it. I rejected every medication offered because I had had enough of everything. I felt a lack of energy, life, and general motivation. I knew I needed to stop and start over. That was my decision—the first good decision on my MS journey!

Afterwards, everything became easier. I started doing yoga, which has become an integral part of my life. It helps me a lot. I've always been mentally strong, but yoga helped me to be even stronger, peaceful, and more stable. I worked on myself constantly.

I read many articles related to MS, listened to countless conversations from different people (including doctors) about how ingredients in food can cause inflammation in the body. Little by little, I changed my lifestyle and diet. My way of thinking, along with my behavior, also evolved. I started eating healthy: no dairy, no red meat, no sugar, sometimes chicken and fish, lots of fruits and vegetables. Of course, sometimes I eat cake on my birthday or at special events, but that's okay. Everything in moderation.

The second decision I made was to remove all people from my life who were negative, boring, and full of unnecessary conversation and empty stories. I have become better for my kids and my family—everyone I love and who loves me.

I started getting massages once a week, which feels amazing. I've learned how to let go of things I have no control over. This helps me manage my anxiety, releasing the major stressors in my life. My daily or weekly routine is very different. I love to dance, and do it whenever I can. I enjoy socializing, going out with friends, and wearing heels! I wear them, even though my legs hurt for two days after. I wear them because they bring me joy. I also like being at home, watching movies, reading books, and just relaxing.

Every morning upon awakening, I drink coffee or cocoa, followed by a trip to the gym or a yoga practice at home. I drink smoothies full of fruit, chia seeds, maca powder, soy or almond milk. I cook healthy meals based around vegetables, chicken, or fish. I don't eat red meat or processed foods. I try to sleep enough. Of course insomnia hinders that occasionally, but it will pass.

I walk a lot, sometimes 10 km a day. I can't run. It makes me very tired and feeling broken the rest of the day. A word of advice: spread your energy throughout the day to make sure you can enjoy every part.

Some days when I struggle with MS and am feeling tired, I've realized I just need a little time alone. Everyone around me understands that and respects my time. Now, I'm forty-six years old, and I feel good. My boys are adults. They both live and work in Austria, and I'm so proud of them. My biggest support in life is my husband. He does everything for us to keep me happy and healthy.

I'm grateful for every day I'm granted. I'm grateful to my father who also had MS. While he was alive, he helped me every step of the way. He gave me the best advice about everything. When I was sad and in pain, he always reassured me by saying, "It will all pass and better will come." I have lived with multiple sclerosis (my best friend) for ten years, and I'm good! I'm going to live another ten, slowly and cleverly.

In my country, more than ten thousand people suffer from multiple sclerosis. In my environment, I know about ten people who are fighting this disease. Most of them have major problems relating to their mental health. Poor mental health immediately influences the course of the disease. Many of their family members contact me, asking me to talk with them in an attempt to inspire motivation. I say yes all the time. I do my best to help them by being an example. Sometimes, I succeed; sometimes, it's simply not enough because you have to want it. Some people just aren't willing. It's easier for them to do nothing. It makes me sad to see how hard life is for them. I never tell them what they should do because I know the disease is different for everyone—the struggle is real! All I can do is share my routine. The most important lesson I've learned is to be mentally strong.

What motivates me most is being good to myself, my children, and my husband. Helping my mother not to worry and my sister not to be afraid also makes me happy. I don't burden the children with my condition. It saddens me to see worry painted on their faces. The best times I have with them are when we go out, and they say to me, "Mom, you are a dragon!"

I simply love life because we never know what tomorrow brings. I try to enjoy every present moment. I'm laughing, and it's nice. When there are hard days, I accept them. I don't stay in that mood. Instead, I go on beautifully...

## FINAL NOTE

***"Before you heal someone, ask him if he is willing to give up the things that made him sick." -Hippocrates***

As we reach the end of this book, I hope these stories have not only inspired you but also encouraged you to take a moment to reflect on your own life. The purpose of this book has been to shine a light on aspects that deserve recognition and change. It's not just about MS or autoimmune diseases; it's a call to awareness, an invitation to slow down and reevaluate our lives.

Our ancestors had wisdom we can learn from, and with today's technology and knowledge, we can create a healthier, more harmonious world, instead of heading down a destructive path. It's as simple as pausing to take a deep breath, enjoying the smell of flowers, and appreciating the beauty that surrounds us.

We hope you've found this book to be a valuable guide. In closing, remember that while healing isn't guaranteed, it's always within reach. The life you choose to lead is firmly in your hands. Join us on **[www.BeatingMultipleSclerosis.com](http://www.BeatingMultipleSclerosis.com)** to explore all the limitless possibilities together.