

# BEATING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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

AGOTA NAWROTH  
& 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.

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# 6

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**Story by**

**KELLY GEORGE**

Diagnosed in 2015

Currently 40 years old

Lives in Winchester, United Kingdom

Instagram: @thekellygeorge

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During May of 2015, while on a family holiday in Texas and Las Vegas, the feeling in my left cheek began slipping away. As the holiday continued, the loss of feeling traveled up toward my eye. Fortunately, my vision was not affected. The facial numbness and its effects were invisible to the naked eye. By the end of the trip, I had zero feeling in the left side of my face. Talking was a struggle, as I couldn't feel the muscles pulling my regular facial expressions during conversations. We returned home: I knew something was seriously wrong. My words turned into slurs as they left my mouth. I walked into an accident and emergency (A & E) department, hoping to be seen. Due to my appearance being visibly healthy and tan from my recent holiday, they insisted I was fine and sent me home, giving zero consideration to the loss of feeling consuming my face.

My concern grew as the lack of feeling climbed higher with each passing day. I worried it would eventually affect my vision. Unsatisfied with the first round of results, I rushed myself to a different hospital, miles away from the last. This time, I was pushing for testing, despite their opinion on my outward appearance. By this point, my speech was so heavily affected by the slurring, I was becoming inaudible. After three days in the hospital and numerous tests later, we finally convinced them to perform a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) on my brain. The results came immediately. They told me “white matter” had been found in my brain, but refused to share anymore information without a neurologist present. It was four in the afternoon when they asked me to stay *another* night as the neurologist couldn’t see me until the following day. They relocated me to the “brain tumor” ward. Thoughts raced through my mind. What did they find—a tumor? What was happening to me? How serious was this? As you can imagine, sleep did not come easily.

At noon the following day, a neurologist and his students came to my bedside. They made me wait in the brain tumor ward without answers until after lunch. He opened his mouth and dropped the bomb. “Miss, I’m afraid you have something we call multiple sclerosis (MS).” He didn’t say anything about a brain tumor or tell me how many weeks I had left to live. Relief quickly washed over me. I didn’t know anything about multiple sclerosis, so I asked question after question—verbal diarrhea.

“What does this really mean? I can live with this and not die?”

“Yes, it’s a condition you live with,” he answered. He continued offering up information. I’ll be honest: I heard none of it. I could have kissed him on the spot! Imminent death was not in my future. I could live with this, whatever it was. That is all I cared about. My one-year-old daughter wasn’t going to lose her mummy! I was over the moon.

The following days brought regular morning headaches. They administered a course of steroids specifically for the face. In the United Kingdom, you are appointed a multiple sclerosis nurse, along with a neurologist. The nurse is the main point of contact. She informed me she was able to do home visits in case my mobility became affected in the future.

And so begins the endless onslaught of MS information. From lesions to scans, relapse to flare-ups, relapse-remitting to progressive—this was a world I knew nothing about. I didn’t know anyone afflicted with this complicated disease who could offer me advice either. I guessed I would

be wheelchair bound by the age of fifty. A huge misconception, but the only bit of knowledge I'd gathered.

The large amounts of information uploaded into my brain in quite a small span of time left me emotionally drained. Bear in mind, I began the month of May on holiday with a fully functioning face. By the end, I'd lost feeling and function, leading to a heavy diagnosis. This massive event unfolded in only three weeks. I was left with an assigned MS nurse (whom I was extremely grateful for) to answer all my questions and to help me "carry on" after receiving my diagnosis. I felt confused.

*How can I "carry on"? Is this a ticking time bomb? Will I die young? When I finish the steroids, will I suffer another relapse? Do I have to take daily meds for the rest of my life? Can I have more children? I want another child! Will they inherit my condition? Do I need to change my diet?*

The questions were endless, plaguing me day and night. I began writing them down, readying myself for the nurse's next visit. I also had my husband to consider. He, too, had burning questions, conducting his own endless research to find answers.

The next factor to consider was how to tell my nearest and dearest that I've been diagnosed with a serious health condition I'll carry around like baggage for the rest of my life. I'd be bombarded with questions I simply didn't have the answers to. This was depressing, to say the least. I kept the news to myself for quite some time. I did tell my closest family and friends but had to end it there. I didn't have the brain capacity or emotional strength to continually repeat myself, answering the same questions over and over: how I knew, how I got diagnosed, what to do next.... Retelling the story depressed me further, which I could not afford.

The type of multiple sclerosis I was diagnosed with is called relapsing-remitting. This means I am prone to relapses. But, with a quick fix of steroids, my symptoms will die down and subside after a few months. This did happen in my case. A win I gladly took! The steroids slowly brought feeling back to my face, and the headaches diminished. Luckily, my speech returned to its normal state.

I was slowly regaining physical freedom, yet I was also struggling with these feelings of guilt. I am an only child, and what if my illness causes my mum to an early grave? Or worse—me! She was questioning herself, too. She worried she had done something to cause this while she was pregnant. "Why doesn't she have MS, but I do?" This thought ran daily

circles on a hamster wheel in her mind. Seeing her so distraught ate me alive. Not to mention the guilt I felt for my husband and daughter. Unknowingly, he married and had a child with a woman he would probably outlive. Taking care of our daughter would fall on his shoulders in the case I became heavily disabled in later years. The dream of one day retiring in the sun while our carefree daughter went to college or traveled the world was becoming just that—a dream. The nightmare of him having to take care of me instead encroached on my sun-soaked fantasy. He deserved an “opt-out” clause in this marriage. In sickness and in health never felt so real as it did right now at the age of thirty-two.

In reflection, keeping my MS hidden for months was a mistake. Now, I’m an open book. I’m happy to bore anyone with my story. It feels like therapy, honestly. It’s no longer a dirty secret everyone feels awkward addressing. If it means I can laugh, cry, or even help others, I am more than happy to overshare.

After many chats with my MS nurse over the following six months, it became apparent how important vitamin D is to a body living with this condition. She informed me that some of her other patients use sunbeds to deal with the deficiency. Others choose relocation to more vitamin D-friendly climates. At this time, I was offered multiple sclerosis medication to slow down the possible recurrent relapses. Neither sunbeds nor medication were appropriate for me as we wanted another baby. A healthy pregnancy and MS preventative treatment do not go hand in hand. Thankfully, I became pregnant with my second child, giving birth in August of 2016. A turmoil of emotions befell this pregnancy as we made the decision to move abroad once the baby was born. My husband expanded his research to include how multiple sclerosis could possibly affect children if one of their parents is afflicted. He discovered that exposing toddlers to all-body, high levels of vitamin D could dramatically lower their chances of developing MS as they grew. This was enough for us to take the scary plunge!

Three months after the birth of my second child, we packed up and jet set to sunny California. We settled our three-year-old, three-month-old, and our business in North County San Diego. We completely relocated there after being granted a work visa called an E2, lasting five years. I wrestled with fear for the future but was forced to trust the process. Over time, I realized stress is my trigger. Symptoms began flaring whilst preparing for the move. It was loads of stress selling our cars and belongings, all while setting up a life, a business, and a home across the ocean in a foreign place where everybody was a stranger. The stress triggered balance issues, dizziness, and numbness around my hands and feet. Once

I boarded the plane, I felt the worst bit was behind me. Most of our belongings had been sold or rehomed. The packing was complete. The teary family and friend goodbyes were done, and the dog was on our flight. Little did I know what was coming...

Stress of the life move led me to my worst relapse to date. After a month in sunny San Diego, I spent a week in the hospital away from my husband and babies. They administered a round of intravenous steroids for an attack on the left side of my face. This time, it was visible. My face appeared opposite of a stroke as the corner of my mouth was lifted up into a permanent smirk. This led to further treatment with steroids after being discharged from the hospital, followed by months of home visits from a nurse. A California neurologist urged me to consider a real treatment called Lemtrada. Lemtrada functions by killing bad white blood cells in the body, then regrowing healthy cells that won't attack themselves the way mine currently do. So, my Lemtrada journey begins. It's a two-year course. Year one consists of a five-day infusion process. During year two, whatever good cells grow back, they kill again to really ensure your body is growing healthy cells. This is a three-day infusion.

The five-day infusions during year one were tough. I was stuck in the hospital, linked-up to a drip, feeding my body Lemtrada. They also include a cocktail of other drugs to counterbalance any reactions one may have. It is not an easy ride. During those five days, I experienced headaches, heavy fatigue, and lumpy hives. I was also medically advised to follow a Lemtrada diet, similar to the guidelines of what you can and can't eat during pregnancy. For several months following the five-day infusion, I was forced to wear a mask. This was long before the COVID era where masks were accepted. I was given strict instructions to keep away from public places like swimming pools, crowded areas, and cafes/restaurants. I was rebuilding my immune system, and I couldn't risk catching a common cold during recovery. A cold would no longer be "common" for me. It could cause serious damage.

The side effects of Lemtrada can be worrisome, requiring consistent monitoring. Precancerous cells, thyroid issues, and kidney problems can occur. To keep an eye out for these detrimental side effects, I gave monthly urine samples and blood tests for five years, beginning the first month of my Lemtrada journey. To ensure the Lemtrada was doing its job by stopping the progression of MS and to check that no new activity or lesions had grown, yearly MRIs were also scheduled. I found much needed comfort in the monthly testing. It felt like I was actually being cared for when my neurologist checked my blood work every month. It was a nice, new feeling.

I am now one year post the five-year window of monitoring, following my Lemtrada journey. I am no longer required to give monthly blood or urine samples. And, I'm thrilled to report I am medicine-free! I don't intend on taking any more medication. I can't say "never" because it depends on how bad the next relapse will be when/if it comes and what treatments are offered at the time.

Vitamin D is the only thing I take daily, and my body is thanking me. I feel great. I also exercise regularly to keep my body healthy and moving. I just completed another yearly MRI to check all is going well in this little old brain of mine. Yes, I occasionally experience odd flaring symptoms like balance issues or pins and needles in my foot, but they pass. I know stress is my main trigger. Getting a common illness like a tummy bug or a cold causes my body stress, bringing on MS symptoms. But, as I said before, nothing lasts longer than a few days.

I realized, from countless hours of research, how healthy eating and a balanced diet could aid the Lemtrada in helping my brain. During my diagnosis and flare ups, I researched food I could eat that fell under the anti-inflammatory category. I knew inflammatory foods could be the cause of the dizziness, numbness, and fatigue I was experiencing. After the start of my Lemtrada journey, I went gluten-free. And—WOW! This made an instant difference in my brain fog. I could now hold a conversation in a restaurant with a friend while reading the menu simultaneously. A task I simply could not complete before. It wasn't until the fog lifted that I realized how bad it had actually been living with it for all those years. Cutting gluten was the best food choice I made for my brain. I also reduced my dairy. I haven't seen an instant change the way I did with cutting gluten, but from my reading, I've determined it's best for me to reduce or cut it out completely.

I'm so happy with my Lemtrada journey. I do believe that having a positive mental attitude, along with supporting the medication by educating myself in nutritional health and general wellbeing is what led me to where I am today. I don't wake up everyday in fear that I have MS. Far from it! Instead, I wake up thinking, "I feel good today, so I'm going to work out!" I ride the good days so well, appreciating them to their fullest. When the odd bad day comes along, I know it won't last with the help of my daily diet. Well, it's not really a diet—it's a way of life. I see food as medicine. I know the power of a walnut and the benefits it brings to my brain. A handful of leafy greens a day keeps my neuro away.

I love going to restaurants but being gluten-free presents its own challenges, especially when eating out. These days, I find there are more

and more options for gluten-free than when I first started. My favorite app that I use is called “Find Me Gluten Free”. It shows restaurants where it’s safe to dine, being gluten and/or dairy-free. I always check beforehand to make sure the menu has a great selection - —not just salad. Pre-planning is essential if you’re eating gluten-free.

Finding food to eat on-the-go is hard, too. A banana and some nuts are always a strong, go-to option. Meal prep is a game changer when it comes to combating the food struggle. When I’m hungry and tired, it helps immensely to have premade food to choose from. I often turn to Instagram for gluten-free recipes.

I cook most evenings, especially having two young children to feed. I make sure we are always eating from multiple food groups. For example, we typically have meat/fish as our protein, potatoes or pasta, and a portion of fruits and vegetables. However, in our home we do “Fun Friday” where the children get pizza. Sometimes, we get takeaway.

During my nutritional research, I stumbled across Dr. Terry Wahls, a medical professional who herself was diagnosed with MS. After trying several MS treatments without success, she decided to take a close look into her diet and the impact of food. This was her game changer. She’s very accessible on Instagram and other social platforms, giving daily updates. She is a huge inspiration for me. The power of food as medicine is quite the discovery.

My daily routine begins with exercise every morning. This includes the gym for dance classes and running, plus walking my dogs. I can’t squeeze in time to meditate, so twenty minutes a day of being outside in the quiet with only my dogs is enough meditation for me. I’m very aware how important it is to keep my body moving. Some days, I have the strength to do weight training and cardio. I often do intermittent fasting in the morning, which means exercise first, followed by a late breakfast of either a homemade smoothie or gluten-free porridge with berries. I tend to drink one smoothie a day. Typically, I make them from scratch, but I’m also fond of ready-made smoothies if I’m rushing out the door. My favorite smoothie I make is pina colada flavored. It has pineapple, mango, spinach, coconut water, and banana. Frozen fruit is the best because it’s icy cold. Adding chia seeds and a little fresh passion fruit on top gives it a nice crunch. I’m a strong believer that food is fuel for the body. Figuring out the correct fuel allows my body to function at its best.

A good night’s sleep is important for everyone, especially if you have a chronic illness. Luckily, I’ve never had an issue sleeping. My top tip is a

candle-lit, lavender salt bath before bed. A hug-in- mug works wonders, too. I have yet to try “golden milk”, consisting of a warm milk of choice, turmeric, ginger, and cinnamon. I’m told it’s the best. Any “sleepy” tea does the job for me.

My career is in the media. Sometimes, I fear my foggy brain will get in the way. I worry I’ll have trouble holding down a job in front of the camera, receiving information through an earpiece, and talking all at the same time. I used to dream of taking the physical therapy or dance teacher route, but I’ve learned to be realistic with myself when it comes to my limits. On heavy fatigue days, there’s no way I’d be able to show up to teach a class of gym enthusiasts. On a more positive note, I refuse to let MS define me or stop me. I am still working in the media, taking it day by day, giving everything my best. Today, my best is enough. My plan for the future consists of staying busy and career-driven, while being the most present, active parent I can be. Multiple sclerosis opened the door to a new career path I never would have considered prior to my diagnosis. I’m currently studying to become a nutritionist. The power of food is so remarkable. I’ll be thrilled to help other chronic illness warriors on their journeys in reducing inflammation and flare-ups through food, once I become a qualified nutritionist.

Having an actual diagnosis is a blessing and a relief. From here, you can move forward, working to see which route is best for you and your MS. I found that having a diagnosis helped me to research and understand my condition more fully. I have a regular doctor, but I hardly need to see her. The only specialist I see is the MS support team that checks in with me every six months, along with my neurologist I’m currently seeing once a year. I also fully appreciate the multiple sclerosis community I’ve found online through Instagram. It’s so inspiring seeing people live with their conditions, day in and day out, holding down their jobs, being full- time parents, and everything else in between. Multiple sclerosis does not define me. It makes me more thankful and appreciative for the good days I’m blessed with. I live for those days and no longer take anything for granted. I’ve become one badass warrior for my children to look up to!



## 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.