

Molly's Story: Crohn's Part II

Last week we began updates on the series Molly's Story. You can find Part I [here](#).

Today we begin with some words from Molly as she reflects today on her journey.

During this time of extreme inner growth I found two quotes that I clung to and said to myself many times a day. The first was, "Easy won't change things...Not ever!" and, "90% won't make a difference."

I needed these reminders because making such a drastic lifestyle switch when I was sick, grieving, and raising a young family was a daunting task. I still cringe when I think of where I started from. But, those changes are some of my proudest accomplishments and I get choked up when I remember the struggle and ultimate healing that was achieved by this hard work!

The second part of this work was saying "NO" and reducing my commitments. I missed many school events and activities that year and for a mom who often coached all the sports, volunteered hours in the classroom and drove the LaChere Family Taxi, it was scary to let those commitments go. It took trusting others to pick up the slack and trusting that my children wouldn't be scarred for life.

Guess what?!

We all survived! And, I can honestly say we are ALL better off because of the work I did to heal my body. My kids have benefited more by my changes than they would have if I had kept with my old habits.



Part II of Molly's Story

Last week we began a new series featuring Molly LaChere and her personal story facing Crohn's Disease head on. Molly shared that it was the passing of her mother in July that served as her pivotal point. Now, with five children of her own to take care of, she decided to finally take control of her health.

"I made a commitment to get better for good. No more half way, no more cheating. From now on I must be 100 percent honest with myself and my needs. It was this daunting task that I set out to conquer."

Molly's symptoms when we began our work together in August 2015 included 14-18 trips to the toilet, round the clock, to pass loose stool, mucus, or at times blood. She was weak and weighed 127lbs. She could not leave the house for more than an hour and only if she was sure she could get to a toilet immediately.

The Plan

Step One of Molly's protocol was to eliminate all foods with gluten and dairy. Because Molly had already greatly reduced dairy she was halfway there. The challenge came with the need to eliminate both gluten and dairy entirely. To do this she would have to change the way she cooked for her whole family.

Step Two of Molly's protocol was to take Silver Birch Sap Gemmotherapy extract 3x daily, beginning with a very small dose.

Molly's task ahead was daunting and while I could offer her encouragement and suggestions, she was the one who would have to find the strength to make the changes in order to fulfill her commitment to herself.

Getting Started

"September came and our family of seven was thrown into the hustle of school and my work began again as a part time teacher. While my journey to better health was underway, all of the distractions could easily have derailed me had I not been so committed to changing my diet. At the beginning of the month I had started taking a Gemmotherapy protocol and had eliminated all dairy and products containing gluten from my diet. Now I was faced with the challenge of creating a life I could live with.

Stress is a huge contributing factor for all individuals with Crohn's Disease and I was being presented with an opportunity to face mine head on. As one who tends to over commit, the statement "Slow down and say NO!" ran through my mind constantly.

The diet changes I committed to were quickly put to the test once our fall schedule kicked in. My standard go-to dinners were no longer on the menu. I was working hard and struggling to stay the course. At first I found myself making meals for the family and then eating my own food alone and separate from them. Given the grief I was dealing with, that plan was not helping. I didn't have time to make two meals, I didn't want to be tempted to eat what they were having, but I didn't want to eat alone. Keeping myself fed was creating incredible stress- just what I was trying to avoid! I began to look for alternatives to all of my family favorites. That was the key!

Rather than doing everything different, I needed to find acceptable alternatives.

So, I headed into October optimistically. I was beginning to find some recipes my family and I could all enjoy together and the 14-18 trips to the restroom that I was experiencing back in August had reduced dramatically with the Gemmotherapy protocol and diet change. I was having a formed bowel movement for the first time that I could remember in years and the frequency was down to 10x daily.

A Set Back

However, just as I was beginning to believe in my body, I faced an entirely different challenge. At the beginning of October, I began to have symptoms of Erythema Nodosum, a rare side effect of Crohn's Disease. Erythema Nodosum causes fevers, extreme pain, sores and swelling in the lower legs. It lasts up to six weeks and then goes away. Each of my legs took

their turn, back to back, of course! With twelve weeks of swelling in my legs, I really had no other choice but to slow down. I had never looked forward to Christmas Break like that before.

During my break, I planned to spend the time healing and, literally, getting back on my feet. Of course, that didn't happen. The swelling from my lower legs moved into my ankles and feet. It lasted weeks and the pain was unbearable. Eventually, the swelling moved to my knees and I had them drained three times. Each time, they took over 80ml of fluid. By this time, the doctors were convinced that I had Rheumatoid Arthritis. I was again devastated and mad that my body was letting me down, especially after I was trying so hard to make positive changes!

I really could have given up. That would have been easy. The doctors were pushing hard for me to take heavy drugs and even my supportive husband was giving me the nudge. How could he not?! I had lost so much weight that I was barely tipping the scale at just over 100 pounds, I had to use a cane to get around, and people who I had known for years didn't even recognize me.

I finally got an appointment with a Rheumatologist in late January. He gave me exactly the hope I needed. Yes, he wanted me to get started on steroid medication, but he had the news I needed to hear. He didn't think I had Rheumatoid Arthritis, but believed I was likely experiencing a systemic side effect from Crohn's disease. I smiled and told him that it was the best news he could have given me! I still only had one disease, and I was determined to beat it in this New Year."

Lauren's Perspective

You can only imagine how difficult it was for Molly to keep her spirits lifted and feel encouraged through the additional symptoms she faced. I was continually amazed at her determination to see this process through and give her body the opportunity and time it needed. She remembers now my telling her not to expect any stability in symptoms for a full year. While she questioned her ability to make it through she began to take things one month at a time.

As I learned more about Molly's health story, I realized she had never had been given an opportunity to experience her body healing itself. From a young age Molly's reoccurring ear infections were always treated with antibiotics. As a gymnast and later on a college diving team, there was never time to be sick and so antibiotic treatment became the norm for her recurring sinus infections. This process taught Molly early on that she didn't have the resources to self heal. Changing a lifelong perspective takes some powerful positive thinking.

As for her body, with what we now know about microbes and gut bacteria, it is clear how the repetitive use of antibiotics was paving the way for the development of a chronic disease.

Our conversations over those trying winter months were focused on helping Molly understand her body's process and begin to build some trust in what she was experiencing. I actually was not surprised that when her 14-18 bowel eliminations was reduced that inflammatory symptoms began to appear on her skin. The *Erythema Nodosum* that is associated with Crohn's disease was actually a very convenient way for her body to continue it's cleaning process, through her skin, until her

kidney health improved. The *Erythema Nodosum* began just as her bowel movements turned solid and decreased.

With a careful eye and teaming with her physician, we supported her body's elimination of this inflammation with Silver Birch Sap Gemmotherapy as a kidney tonic and later Black Currant to reduce inflammation and support her adrenals.

Later, as her bowel movement decreased significantly and became formed we supported healthy elimination through her bowels and kidneys with Blueberry. As her elimination stabilized I gave Molly a Homeopathic remedy that would support her vitality and relieve her acute symptoms. We also made adjustments to her diet as we found that she could not tolerate legumes or grains in her inflamed state. Finally we turned to her physician for guidance on medication to suppress symptoms only when necessary and for a short period of time.

Molly rightfully needed a lot of emotional support during this transition period and weekly updates on her elimination and state of inflammation were critical for my advising. It was an intense period but she persevered because she was determined to write a new story for herself.

Interested in learning more about Gemmotherapy? You can find out more here. If you are called to learn about integrating Gemmotherapy into your practice you may be interested in my online trainings and events available here.