

In the Spotlight with Anne Mills



Anne used to be a successful businesswoman, creative, capable & confident, until she developed the symptoms of CFS & fibromyalgia at the beginning of 1998. In her struggle to get to grips with the life changing effects of fibromyalgia and her desire to help other people with the condition she has put together a series of booklets dedicated to various aspects of living with fibromyalgia. Here she tells her story and what inspired her to write her series of eBooks.

What was your experience of developing fibromyalgia?

Horrible! My partner and I can now laugh about some of the really silly things I said or did, but the pain and devastation are not forgotten.

Like many others I was not initially diagnosed with fibromyalgia. A bite from some nasty little bug carrying the bacteria, Rickettsia, caused a blood infection which is thought to have been my trigger. We were initially overjoyed to have some explanation for the state I was in and there was hope that I would return to good health quickly. I had been feeling distinctly 'off' for some months and we really did think that a few weeks of treatment would see me back to my old self again (that was May 1998). We didn't have a clue about what was to come.

Referred to a medical practitioner who was using antibiotics to treat patients with similar types of infections, I was prescribed simultaneous doses of two different antibiotics over several months. In addition, I received painkillers, anti-depressants and sleep medication. Not surprisingly, I deteriorated - my general health noticeably worsened, and I rapidly became a complete zombie. This was when I hit the depths of my fibromyalgia experience: I was in unrelenting pain, unable to reason, incapable of holding a conversation and becoming increasingly depressed. While I know it happened to me, I sometimes think this happened to someone else, I have significant patches of time that I simply cannot remember. Without my partner rescuing me and taking me to see a naturopath (who was also a medical practitioner, herbalist and iridologist) I just cannot imagine what may have become of me.

What effect did this have on your personal life and work?

Although the symptoms arrived in a very gradual way, I was struggling for quite a time before finally reaching the point where I had to walk away from the business my partner and I had built up over 15 years. This was extremely distressing for me, but I always contend that it was so much more difficult for my partner, who had to take on an additional role as my carer.

Not only was I physically limited, I felt during the next year or two that I was fading away, as I had lost my personality and interest in life. Knowing nothing about the illness, and unable to take in any information, meant I didn't know what was happening or likely to happen. The overwhelming fatigue made it seem impossible to fight back physically or mentally. I felt totally useless as I was unable to do the simplest tasks or give my partner any meaningful support. The worst, though, was my sense of humour totally deserted me! Predictably, our business eventually failed. With little understanding or support from my family, which I have since discovered is rather too common, we faced a very uncertain future for a time virtually alone. However, as I had been diagnosed with CFS and a little later with fibromyalgia, it did mean we could start rebuilding our life very slowly!

How did you start putting your life back together?

The very first step towards recovery for me was nutrition - both what I ate and nutritional supplements. A hair analysis, a particularly helpful (and painless!) procedure, provided my naturopath with a starting point and a plan to build up my deficiencies. A traditional Chinese medicine practitioner was significantly helpful in reducing my pain, overcoming my sleep difficulties and improving my digestion. The mud-like taste and texture of the Chinese herbs cooked up into a warm 'tea' to sip provided a whole new challenge until I started to feel a little improved! Then a friend, who was a qualified massage therapist, had done research into fibromyalgia so she was able to administer the tender point test and to massage me in a manner that provided me with relief, although not entirely comfortably due to the fibromyalgia. However, the most important member of my little 'team' has been my partner, who was incredibly patient in the face of my maddening mindlessness and always encouraging. Having supportive people around you that take the time to understand what it is that you are experiencing can, I believe, make an enormous positive difference.

Over the years I have tried many, many treatments and therapies but nutrition has remained the most powerful for me. With improvements in my cognitive abilities



and a little more energy, I felt brave enough to undertake a diploma in clinical nutrition as I wanted to better understand what I could do to improve my own health. Correspondence learning was necessary, as any sufferer will know, because it is impossible to know which day your brain may be full of fog or at what hour of the day your body decides to close down. I still follow the nutritional guidelines in my book *Create Energy!*, which was the direct result of my studies in nutrition as well as other natural therapies.

What inspired you to put these booklets together?

I have this belief that things in life happen for a reason and it is best to find something positive within them. As I had gathered together bits and pieces of information in my mission to beat my illness, I believed that someone else may find the knowledge helpful. My well-known quote is, *"These are the things I wish someone had shared with me!"*

It is the day to day living with fibromyalgia that seems to be missing in many of the books and much of the information available. We do need the more formal information, but we are also desperately seeking ways of managing. I found this practical information the most difficult to find. Others who do not have the energy or access to ideas and suggestions may benefit from what I have collected and studied.

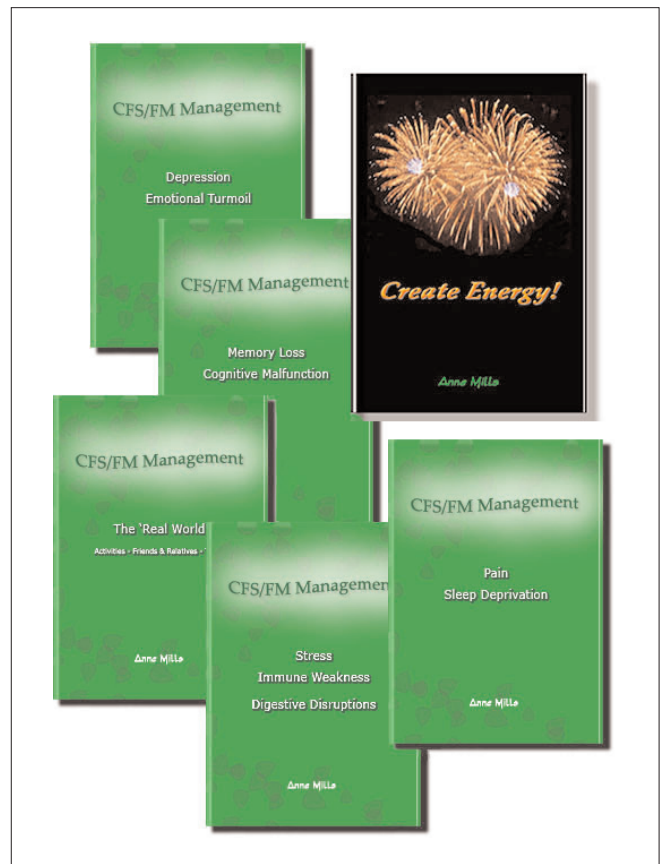
With a diploma in clinical nutrition I am able to offer unique advice as a fellow sufferer of CFS and fibromyalgia that has beaten the illness into some submission! Motivation comes from a simple desire to help - I know how terrible this illness can be and how even the smallest degree of relief in one symptom can really lift the spirits and provide some energy to tackle the next. So, I started writing...

What topics do you cover?

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Management is offered as six separate books so people can choose the ones that best meets their needs. They all contain practical strategies, a range of therapies and other suggestions - and lots of them, as what works for one of us may not work for another. This is an approach that is quite different to many other books as there is not just one single treatment or regime promoted.

The six books are entitled:

- Create Energy! - Nutrition, Supplements & Exercise
- Depression - Emotional Turmoil
- Memory Loss - Cognitive Malfunction
- Pain - Sleep Deprivation



Stress - Immune Weakness - Digestive Disruptions
The 'Real World' - Activities, Friends & Relatives, Travel

There are also three free articles available from the website. Each is written to help explain to family, friends or others about what a sufferer and their carer/s may face:

- * A Description of Fibromyalgia
- * A Description of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- * The Cruelty of CFS/FM

How can people access these booklets?

The books and articles are available at:
<http://fmuk.cfsfm.hop.clickbank.net>

There are excerpts from all the books on the website so you can read a little from each and also access some free suggestions. They are eBooks which means that as soon as you make an online purchase you can download your own copy and put it to work for you today!

A generous percentage of each book's price goes to FMA UK to provide further support for fibromyalgia sufferers in the UK.

