

Editorial

# Never giving up

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Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that can cause unusual activities such as loss of consciousness or seizures. Looking at this definition, you probably think my disease is one that someone would have to live with forever. I can tell you from firsthand experience that it is not just another one of those diseases that is looked at, treated, and then cured; it was an uphill battle everyday. I dealt with Epilepsy for most of my life, but today I am cured. It wasn't easy, and let me tell you I have seen many doctors and had my fair share of seizures. But, today I am not only cured of epilepsy, but I am an independent woman and stronger because of my experience.

The earliest signs of my seizures occurred due to the many high temperatures I had when I was a baby. My first seizure happened when I was 12 years old. My fall off of a balance beam triggered my seizures. During my years of epilepsy, my seizures ranged from temporal lobe seizures to grand mals. My body would quickly get immune to the medications my doctor prescribed me. I was having 2-3 seizures everyday, and I was not happy that my doctors could not control them.

During my years of seizures, I would always worry about being stared at or judged. I also thought people would not like me because of my seizures. Because I was very unhappy, I decided to do something about it. I read and studied everything I could about epilepsy surgeries. My doctors could not control the seizures because, when they would change my medicine every few months, my body would get immune to the medication. With all of the trouble I was having with my body getting immune to medication, I read about surgery for epilepsy patients. I had a great doctor talk to me about epilepsy surgery, and he explained everything about testing for the surgery and the surgery itself.

So, the only thing that I could think of was how could epilepsy surgery help me?! So, I read all about it and watched any tapes I could possibly get my hands on about the procedure. All the knowledge I obtained about the epilepsy surgery came from books, magazines, articles, and tapes. Everything I could possibly read about

the epilepsy surgery I did. At that time we were not as fortunate to have the resources to study and research seizures as we are so privileged to have now.

When my doctors gave me the option to either change my medication or go through the testing for the procedure, I did not hesitate for even a second. I was definitely ready to go through the testing for surgery. Through the two and a half years leading up to the surgery, I went through many tests including EEG, MRI, PET Scan, and Wada testing, as well as many hospital visits. Finally, in August of 2000, I was set to have my surgery at the Emory Hospital in Atlanta in Georgia.

Fifteen years has gone by since my surgery, and I am off my medications and seizure free! I am back to doing things such as riding my horses, driving, and working. I have also been given the privilege to speak about my epilepsy surgery to the Emory Symposium and NSDF. I have also started HOPES, Helping Others Prepare for Epilepsy Surgery, on Facebook. People need to hear from someone who has had a good experience from the epilepsy surgery. I feel very strongly that people, like me, who have benefited from the surgery should speak out and let others know the knowledge they have obtained on seizures and how it is beneficial to everyone.

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