

REAL LIFE success stories

BE INSPIRED BY THE COURAGE AND COMMITMENT OF THESE EXTRAORDINARY, ORDINARY WOMEN



natural healing

KAREN MORRIS RECLAIMS HER HEALTH – AND HER SMILE – WITH AN UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACH

KAREN MORRIS

CAPE TOWN

AGE 43

LIVING WITH ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS-REACTIVE ARTHRITIS

WHEN I THINK BACK TO HIGH school, I remember how pain and exhaustion dominated my days. At age 15 I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.

My condition was later diagnosed as ankylosing spondylitis-reactive arthritis and I was put on a prescription of powerful painkillers and anti-

inflammatories. I managed to lead a relatively normal life, but experienced breakthrough pain every now and then. After 10 years these became more frequent and soon the medication lost its effect. I was once again in excruciating pain – even on maximum doses.

My doctors recommended moving up to a more powerful class of drugs, but I was 25, and the prospect of being on such potent pills for the rest of my life was worrying. Surely there'd be long-term side effects?

A friend had been suggest-

ing I consult a naturopath for years, but I was sceptical having had no experience with alternative medicine. But at this point I felt I had nothing to lose since the alternative was a lifetime on heavy medication.

I went to see naturopath Heiner Lotze (and later Renata Zijp), who used iridology to

diagnose my condition and picked up that my diet did not agree with my constitution. He gave me an eating plan that eliminated wheat and dairy, and included various teas and supplements. I followed it religiously and after three months I started to feel the first signs that it was working. My pain had decreased dramatically, and I was full of energy for the first time in years. I started slowly reducing my medication under Heiner's supervision, and a year later I was completely off it and feeling better than ever.

I completed my first Argus Cycle tour that year – a major achievement considering that 12 months earlier unlocking my car door was a painful challenge. I have subsequently lived a mostly pain free and active life. But I have learnt that this approach to my condition is not all or nothing. There have been odd times that I have had to return to conventional medicine to get through a rough patch. My continued health depends on a balance between the two.

Today I feel like this journey was all meant to be, because it was through this experience that I discovered my niche in life, as at age 40 I went back to university to study complementary medicine, and I will qualify to practice as a naturopath at the end of next year.

motivational tips

- ▶ Explore different approaches to health, even if they seem unconventional, and make place for returning to the conventional when called for.
- ▶ Sometimes the answer is much simpler than you think. Eating correctly for my constitution, exercising, rest, and supplements were essential to my success.



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