

Regaining My Life After Medications



Identity Magazine | Alesandra Rain

We often think of prescription drugs as safe and helpful. But what happens when someone is prescribed too many medications for innocent health issues? Alesandra learned the hard way, but can now help others regain their identity, just as she did after recovering and learning to accept who she is after the prescriptions.

I never dreamed that taking medications as prescribed could destroy my life, or that the medical community was so unaware how dangerous commonly prescribed drugs could be.

I haven't had an easy life. An auto accident as a teenager led to a dozen surgeries. In spite of my physical trials, I went on to succeed in life.

But it was in my mid-30s, in the midst of a horrible marriage, that insomnia reigned. A simple trip to my doctor provided immediate relief through an anxiety medication. Within a few weeks I developed bronchitis and was prescribed antibiotics. Another month and my heart started skipping beats and a cardiologist prescribed blood pressure pills. Another bout of pneumonia required an antibiotic. My lungs declined making inhalers a necessity. Then I was referred to a psychiatrist for persistent insomnia. This is when the real hell began.

He prescribed Klonopin, a potent anxiety medication. Years later I read the account of Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac, who stated that cold-turkey withdrawals from Klonopin was equivalent to being kicked into hell. I think she understated.

The Klonopin worked for a time, then the seizures started — wicked, horrible seizures that left me traumatized. A neurologist was consulted and more pills were added. I became permanently disabled, taking over a thousand pills a month. This continued for ten years.

Then my pain soared requiring the first of 14 spinal surgeries. A spinal device was implanted to block the pain signal from my brain.

One day I woke up and actually saw what I had become. I'm not sure why this day brought realization, but I wanted my life back.

I realized there was no exit strategy for pharmaceuticals and when I couldn't get my doctors to help me, I went to a treatment center and went cold-turkey. There were unending weeks of screaming fear, pain, and altered perceptions. But I hung on, knowing my life was meant for more.

Quitting psychiatric medications is entirely different than illegal drugs and can bring down the strongest of us. It was in my third month, after the worst of the hallucinations passed that I realized the world needed help for people like me — innocent addicts.

That little seedling led to the formation of Point of Return, a nonprofit that assists the public escape pharmaceuticals. In the last eight years, we've helped nearly 20,000 people in 63 countries — the youngest being 4-years-old with the oldest 96. And by helping others I completely healed myself.

I will be 54-years-old in a few weeks and after 34 surgeries, I have no pain, anxiety, depression or insomnia, and I am not on any prescription or over-the-counter medications. I spend my days assisting others who are just as frightened as I once was. And through it all, I realized that my greatest adversity was actually a supreme gift.

See how Alesandra answers our Identity Five Questions:

What have you accepted within yourself and/or within your life? Is there anything you are working on accepting?

I've learned to accept that all of life challenges have merit.

What do you appreciate about yourself or your life?

I appreciate every moment now and especially time with my border collie Sky.

What have you achieved, or what are you working to achieve personally, physically, or mentally?

I have a purpose in life and that is everything.

What is your no-so-perfect way? We are all unique with quirks and imperfections, so why not flaunt them and embrace them!

I'm a workaholic now, and feel like I have 10 years to make up for. Balance is something I still struggle with.

How would you complete this sentence, "I Love My..." This has to be about you, physically or mentally.

I love my life in its entirety.

<https://www.identitymagazine.net/2011/10/12/getting-my-life-back/>

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