



## Cheryl's MdDS Story

### *Summer of Change 2010*

#### *How the Symptoms Started*

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, after a simple marriage ceremony to my new second husband, and a small dinner reception with a few family members and close friends, we returned home that evening as a new couple. While climbing up a short flight of stairs, I tripped and fell onto the steps. I sustained no head injury, but was

slightly shaken by the sudden jarring motion, as I caught myself on my forearms. I stood up, walked in the house, and felt no after effects of the fall.

UNTIL, two days later, I awoke to a severe rocking, floating sensation in bed, and my fear and worry increased as I prepared to get up and go to work. I have been rocking, and floating, and bobbing and swaying ever since. In addition to these symptoms, I experience insomnia, nausea, serious balance problems, head, jaw, neck and shoulder muscle tension, anxiety from the fear of falling, and severe, daily, debilitating fatigue. My levels of intensity, maintain a daily pattern, on a scale of 1-10, of 5 in the first half of the day, and increase to 7-8 by mid afternoon. Most of my normal activities, going to work, housework, cooking, gardening, grocery stores, restaurants, movies, social interactions in groups, loud noises, busy patterns, attending church, and caring for my mother, all increase the symptoms. My life took a sudden and disparaging turn that February 2004. My husband has continued to encourage me, and supports all my efforts to cope, and search for answers.

#### *The Diagnosis*

I have spent the past six years, in a frustrating, and disappointing search for

a diagnosis. I could not understand what had happened, why there were no doctors who knew what it was, and why it continues constantly, 24/7, with no breaks or remissions. My family doctor treated me for vertigo for three months, and when there was no improvement, referred me to neurologists, one after the other. I had MRI's, EEG's, EMG's, EKG, cardiovascular evaluations x 2, vestibular rehabilitation on three different occasions, complete ENT evaluations x 2, psychiatric evaluations x 2, several medication trials, physical therapy totaling four years, and spent three years going to the Cleveland Clinic, with no conclusive diagnosis or treatment. No one seemed to know what my symptoms were being caused by, or what could be done for me. From there, I was referred to Dr. Timothy Hain, in Chicago. I chose not to travel the 5 hours for an evaluation by Dr. Hain, as I was told even with a diagnosis, there is no treatment, no cure, and can last for years.

### *Where I am Today*

In January, 2010, as I reluctantly made a decision to retire early from my counseling profession, and feeling quite hopeless and discouraged, I was exploring Dr. Hain's website, and I found the MdDS online support group, and I knew that I had found my diagnosis. MdDS. Everything fit with what the other members were sharing, even though I had not stepped off of a cruise ship. I have found information and significant emotional support from this group, and learning about the research study by Dr. Cha that began in January 2010, has restored my sense of hope.

### *Summer of Change*

While reading about ways I could help bring awareness to the MdDS Foundation, and how grateful I am to be a part of the support group, I decided to participate in the Summer of Change fund raising project. I will collect as much change as possible over the summer, and donate to the MdDS "cause", with the hope that in one small way, it might benefit Dr. Cha's research study, and someday find a way to diagnose, treat, or cure this debilitating disorder.

[Cheryl in Michigan, 6 years, 5 months, 24/7](#)