

## Recovering out of Sight

It became apparent on the day of discharge I had no concept of time, 20 minutes could feel like four hours and an hour could seem like 2 minutes, the Morphine was quite disorientating. Having safely reached the flat, I had exhausted myself completely and barely made it to the bed before falling asleep. Getting ready and travelling take quite a lot of energy, I had to remember that.

Now that I was in charge of my own medication, I knew that the safest option would be to keep my own record of when I had last taken each tablet because my memory wasn't the most reliable and though I kept thinking I would remember timings correctly, I knew I wouldn't. As such, I decided it would be easiest to txt myself the time and dosage of each drug every time I took them, this proved to be very useful as I would probably have overdosed without it.

The first few days, I would get ready, eat and sleep mostly. In the entirety of the day I may have spent 3-5 hours awake maximum, the rest of the time I was just resting. I didn't feel like doing anything, conversation was tolling, as was trying to concentrate on watching anything etc. it was very peaceful just lying down and drifting in and out of consciousness. If pain levels peaked I would become very snappy and moody, it was a careful time of trying to understand what balance of medication was needed.

My mum was fetching and carrying everything for me as I was told not to lift anything heavier than ½ a kettle, so to be safe lighter than that. I wasn't told not to bend down either, so that took a conscious effort to comply to. My sister would very kindly do my hair and sit with me in my brief conscious moments. Between the pair of them they would figure out my dietary cravings, all of which were centred on being high in protein – essential for growth and repair. Having them both there was like a safety net, I knew if I dropped or something went wrong I had company. I really valued all their understanding, help and support, most of which they did without questioning or explanation. I remember when I was being discharged and my sister asked where the nearest A&E was, there was part of me that wanted to comment but the saner side told me it was good information.

Swallowing, laughing and talking seemed to be enough exercise and strain for the inside, any excess of either would result in an uncomfortable throb and I assume some form of swelling. My vision was still taking a hit and so my glasses were my constant companion if I wanted to see clearly. Finding a comfortable position in light of the new alignment of my neck was also a learning curve and it was an effort to try and figure it out, but I was compliant and kept listening to whatever my body wanted, I felt it was important for recovery that I didn't overdo it or provoke anything.

Those days were all about resting and I was so very glad that I didn't have to try and evoke the effort to entertain visitors. Many felt bad they weren't there, but I was grateful they wasn't because I really didn't have the energy and I would have felt bad if they came all that way to watch me sleep or sit there in a moody silence wishing I could just lie down. Yes I missed them in part, but communicating with them during my conscious minutes gave me something nice to do, there was always a message waiting for me when I woke up, and that was enough to make me smile. I was very aware they would all be waiting for me when I got back, and that was going to be eventful in itself.

A few days after being discharged, I had my incision checked and dressing changed by my sister at the flat (I am very lucky she is a nurse). There was no signs of infection and it was

continuing to heal well despite the fluctuating pain. As always, I showered at least once daily, and continued to wear the very annoying DVT stockings as much as possible. Being clean and comfortable was pretty much all I did, it was almost like being a pampered baby. I couldn't have asked for a better start to recovery, I really am considerably lucky.