



Karen Muranko
Surviving Panic Disorder
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“My mind is an incredible device. It allows me to perform all of the functions I need to go about my daily affairs. It is also my enemy. My mind is creating terrifying thoughts, feelings and emotions over which I have no control. At first, I feel as if my feet are not touching the ground. I’m levitating and can’t seem to land; soaring, floating, feeling out of body. I feel as if I may shatter into a million pieces and blow off the planet like fine dust. When I can focus again, I realize that I am huddled on the bathroom floor hunched against the wall, my head in my hands. I quiver with fear and want to rid myself of these horribly frightening sensations. These feelings suddenly change. My skin is now my enemy. It feels so incredibly tight and itchy, almost hot. No amount of scratching will make it go away. I wish for an imaginary zipper that will provide me with the ultimate freedom from my skin. Sadly, there is no zipper. I sit frozen in time on the bathroom floor waiting, praying for the feelings to subside. They do but I know they will return to haunt me once again. It’s just a matter of time.”

Even after being in recovery since June of 2002, reading this excerpt from my journal brings tears to my eyes. I felt like this many times before I was blessed to meet the people who I refer to as my “Team” who continue to keep me on an amazing path of recovery. Recovery is, by my definition, victorious. Victory over Panic Disorder when I didn’t think it was possible.

I lost hope many times since I lived with Panic Disorder for 20 years before receiving a proper diagnosis. My hope continued to diminish when the treatments and techniques I was using didn’t seem to be making a big difference. It took another 10 years to meet my “Recovery Team.” I use the word Team because I believe it may take more than one person or one method to overcome Panic Disorder. My Team believed in me and had faith in me even when I felt I just couldn’t do it any more. They support me should I experience times of stress and do it without questions or judgment.

My life challenges and journey to recovery helped me realize it was more than just being Panic and Anxiety free. I wanted to recreate myself as a non-panicked, non-anxious person and be able to assist others in finding the right people, their personal Team, to guide them on their own path of recovery. I believe that by exploring the many options available, more people can achieve mental wellness.

Since I speak openly about my life with Panic Disorder, I want to be the voice for those who are afraid to speak out. I want to be the face that represents the millions of others presently living with a mental health disorder who fade into the crowd. I feel no shame or embarrassment when I say the words, "I am a survivor of Panic Disorder." I work to educate, advocate and offer encouragement to the millions to help them believe they are not flawed.

I feel that I have accomplished my goal of being panic-free and enjoy living without the constant worries that can accompany Panic Disorder. I am a completely different and happier person than I was before my recovery. I like the person I am today and want to offer hope to those living with Panic or Anxiety Disorder believe that recovery and mental wellness is achievable.



Congratulations, Karen!

Your victory gave you a new, more fulfilling life.

Now, sharing your victory

and the lessons learned, you give

hope to others who suffer from mental illness and

show them how they too can positively change

with treatment and the right team.

We are proud to count you as a

Victorious Woman!

Learn more about Karen Muranko and find out how she can help you
"Take Charge of Your Mental Health"
at www.AnxietyWellnessMentor.com.