

# My Experience with Affective Disorder and Candidiasis

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As a child depression hit me on Sunday afternoons about 4:00 p.m. in our house filled with people. I felt isolated and lonely, as if no one were there. It was a terrible feeling, and I dreaded Sunday afternoons.

I remember Sunday mornings, too, when I felt my body would burst with pent-up anger. It was my job to polish the family's shoes for church, and I remember throwing the bottle of white liquid polish across the porch, releasing the angry force in me. My dad promptly whipped me for doing this, but I refused to cry. When I could tell he would not stop until I did, I quickly gave in to the requirement.

With my depression I also remember wanting to run away from home. I hid behind the couch and thought about leaving notes. I frequently considered killing myself by drinking the bottle of rubbing alcohol that sat high on the kitchen shelf. The skull and cross bones with its "Poison" label was a reminder that it would be an easy way to go. I must have been six, seven, or eight.

With my sporadic behavior, my parents wondered what could be wrong with me; they tried behavior modification with incentives to help me *be good*. I wanted to be good, but being good and *feeling the way I felt* really were not connected in my young mind.

My problems, I believe, began even earlier in my life, even to the days of the cradle. I have tracked my early childhood events and behavior through my aunts who cared for me when my mother, who became ill with two young children, could not care for me. They told me I was not a pleasant child to be around. I kicked, bit, and scratched and was very afraid when left with them. Even as an infant I was "colicky" and cried a lot. My parents, not knowing what to do for me, just closed the door to my room and let me cry myself to sleep.

As a new born my mother tried to breast feed me, but there was not enough milk. At two I had my tonsils and adenoids removed;

this was 1946.

In the '40s and '50s when I was growing up, most families did not use alcohol, and drugs as they are used today were unheard of. My mother, who is physiologically much like myself, took Seconal to help calm her nerves. When I became too excited she also gave me 1/2 a tablet.

I enjoyed school and learning very much, and as a teenager in high school I excelled, winning many awards in music, drama, science competitions, and 4-H. I was not one of the clique and preferred academic things. I was also inventive and creative and enjoyed making things with whatever materials were at hand.

In 1964, my third year of college, when I began living off campus and cooking for myself, I was troubled with a "floating mind" that would not absorb anything. It is a fact that my mind can easily be distracted, but on the positive side, it is very interested in everything around it.

This "floating" and trouble sleeping I attribute now to dietary habits. I was eating a large pancake with syrup on it with coffee for breakfast; carried a peanut butter sandwich for lunch and bought a carton of milk. While studying I can still remember going over and over the words I was trying to retain in my mind as my brain was very reluctant to absorb this information.

The grungy kitchen we students cooked in was not an inviting place, but in the evening we shared a community atmosphere, and for supper I ate meat, vegetables—probably there weren't many fresh greens among them, and fruit. As I have always been very health conscious, the basic seven, then later the basic four, food groups were not abstractions to me. In my room, however, I ate jelly rolls for snacks, and I drank alcohol on dates. Some nights gray forms came and went in my mind when I could not sleep. I saw the school psychiatrist, but he never questioned me on my food or eating habits. I vowed that if I ever got through this terrible episode, I would

1. A pseudonym.

never again do whatever I was doing to bring on these gray images. I wanted to quit school. This depression in college seemed to accompany my moving out of the dorm. This was my first experience away from home and first encounter with being responsible for my eating routine. Since I was having what I considered severe problems, I began to research the family history for insight into what ailed me. I had an aunt who had been sick in bed for one or two days much of her life after having her family in for a big dinner on Sunday. I learned as much about her condition as I could. I also learned there were many family members on Mother's side with diabetes and carbohydrate metabolism problems.

In order to pay my way through college I began working in a university hospital as a ward clerk. Later I became Dr. A. Barnstadt's medical secretary. I loved the hospital and I learned much about medicine from Dr. Barnstadt and those around me. In 1966 I married my wonderful husband, and for six years took birth control pills. We moved to another university for his education, and I obtained a good job; but, my life was a series of ups and downs. With the BCPs I was frequently in my GP's office crying and depressed. I often dieted, drank wine coolers and beer, and ate lots of moldy peanuts in those "two-fers" hours after work. I had the glucose tolerance test done which Dr. Gordon did not know for sure what it proved and a thyroid test which was normal. When sleep became impossible and my mind was racing, Dr. Gordon put me on Elavil—which I consider to be a terrible mistake. I continued to study my aunt who everyone said had low blood sugar, and in 1981 put myself on the low blood sugar diet. At this time I gave up sugar, alcohol, and coffee, and ate whole wheat bread and other healthful foods. I suffered the incredible experience of sugar withdrawal and plunged ahead into life.

This diet helped the depression very much. Never again did I get to those terrible lows which I identified as pellagra from Dr. Abraham Hoffer's writings<sup>1</sup> and studies by Dr. Joseph Goldberger<sup>2</sup>. Never again did I have the hallucinations that came when I drank wine and milk together<sup>3</sup>, giving me LSD-like experiences.<sup>4</sup> Today, some spices in foods will give me wild dreams, but generally I stay away from cumin, chili powder and eat only very

plain foods now.

My life seemed now to revolve around this hypoglycemic, two hour eating routine. And even though I found myself relatively free of depression—at least the severe kinds I had become so familiar with, I had trouble sleeping and experienced jerking of muscles at very rapid intervals sometimes all night long. I also experienced severe cramps in my legs at night, bruised easily, and my nerves were frayed, causing problems in various quarters. Eating was a primary concern for me; consequently, my whole life seemed organized around this event. In fact, spontaneously at night I would awaken to need a "fix" of milk, yogurt and bulgur, or cheese. Then I could go back to sleep.

In 1982 I read Dr. Richard Wurtman's article in *Scientific American* "Nutrients That Modify Brain Function"<sup>5</sup> and determined that my snacks should be protein oriented. Consequently, I selected whole wheat bread (1/4 slice) spread with sugar-free peanut butter and a piece of cheese on it, and 1/2 cup of milk for my snacks. This seemed to work, but my level of energy was not good. In fact, as I think back on it, I probably deteriorated a lot from this regimen of mold-reactive foods. Try as I might, I couldn't seem to get my health restored. Five of us women from surrounding towns where I worked formed a hypoglycemia group and met and discussed what we were doing. Today we know that one had a parasite, another was stricken with candidiasis, another had yeast plus allergies to wheat and other grains, and molds. I had allergies but did not know it, and I have not had the opportunity to learn about the other woman.

Frustrated that I could not find a doctor to help me and afraid of what might be wrong with my brain, I researched and read and constructed theories in my mind about myself. In 1989 I tried an elimination diet. When I tested milk, it was as though an atom bomb had exploded in my head—the stars, the confusion, and the distractibility I experienced were just unbelievable. So I read extensively: Dr. Carl Pfeiffer, Carlton Frederick, Ph.D., Dr. Abram Hoffer, Linus Pauling, Ph.D., Richard Passwater, Ph.D., my biochemistry book, monographs, etc., and determined from Dr. Pfeiffer's book *Mental and Elemental Nutrients*<sup>6</sup> that either I had an inborn error of metabolism—maybe Hartnup's disease—or I

had allergies.

Dr. Fuller, my GP, helped me evaluate for the first; these came back negative. I had heard of Dr. Morley at an out-of-state allergy clinic and determined I would go there for allergy testing. I must admit I was skeptical at this point, since so far no one had been able to help me find what was wrong. Doctors just wanted to push pills at me. If I was expected to take more of the "drugs" like Elavil that Dr. Gordon recommended to cure my depression, then I wanted no part of it. I felt doped and I thought this was a very poor approach to medicine—to kill the patient with the cure!

After the Hartnup's disease evaluation proved negative, Dr. Fuller encouraged me to see Dr. Morley at the allergy clinic as many of his patients had received help there. I doubt at this point that any of his patients had brain allergies, or that the problem had even been recognized in this clinic as it seemed to me that most acceptable allergies were respiratory or dermatitis.

In 1989 I began seeing Dr. Morley, and he determined that I had yeast allergy and allergy to molds and dust and to chemicals. Since then he has been desensitizing me to these molds and chemicals and has succeeded in removing much of the physical lethargy and the mental cloudiness and collapse of my mind that I had experienced.<sup>7</sup>

All the while I read extensively, learning more about my condition, but every summer when my husband and I went into the Canadian wilderness for a canoeing expedition, I became worse. I became depressed—even suicidal again. This bothered me as there seemed no one to tell—to help me. When I wrote to Dr. Morley about this, he called immediately and put me on Nisoral 200 mg. All the while everyone said I looked great, and, indeed, I had good color, but no one could tell what was on the inside—how I felt.

Since I was allergic to most foods and to many of my vitamins and to chemicals around me, Dr. Morley encouraged me to stay on a rotation diet. He could not help me with my vitamin regimen as this clinic does not deal with nutrition. So I read about nutrition and supplements and experimented. I have learned that one big mistake I made was to take Brewer's yeast as a chromium and B vitamin supplement for seven years. It inoculated me with *Candida tropicalis* and was very resistant to Nystatin which I had taken until it didn't seem to do any good. I continued to

struggle along; at least that's how I felt about the help I was getting. I didn't seem to be getting very far very fast. In fact all the books I'd read said the yeast problem should show a great deal of improvement in several months. Well, it had been two years for me.

Then the guillotine fell in 1990. In June I found what I thought could be a lump in my right breast. I watched it and in August called Dr. Fuller's office for an appointment, but I could not get into see him until late in September. In the ensuing time I felt the lump enlarge. The aspiration was suspicious for cancer. A lumpectomy done October 1 was positive for carcinoma, and on October 7 a modified radical mastectomy was performed; chemotherapy was begun November 6 and continued through May of 1991.

This was the coup de grace forme, and with the ensuing shock of cancer, everything took place so quickly—but my husband and I followed the prescribed protocol for breast cancer patients. Since then I have calculated that my immune system had been so deteriorated that cancer had set in. The number of T-lymphocytes and B-cells were no longer adequate and could not fight the free radicals, allergies, and pre-cancerous cells in my system. My body was a petri dish for cancer's growth.

It was all a terrible loss to me—losing part of my body, losing my hair, my self-image, getting fat, having no energy, enduring extreme depression from the foods I ate. It was the antithesis of everything I had ever worked for, everything I ever thought about myself—this great ugliness. Yet, I was not the first, and I quickly discovered that *there were so many of us*—breast cancer victims. But I survived all of this; and in retrospect perhaps I wouldn't do it the same, but the past is over. Only the future lies ahead.

During my chemo I again suffered severe depression and suicidal feelings, but my fingernails had never been stronger and I could have climbed a wall. This was a real change as Mother's and my nails are flat and plastic; mine are usually better than hers. I remained on the Nisoral through chemo, but this did not take those black feelings away.

Just when the chemo ended I obtained a job, working as a typist in a private counseling

practice and eventually became responsible for two people's jobs. The trauma of work for me came with typing very graphic descriptions of child sexual molestation and losing my friend in a traffic accident. With the stress of so much violence, I lost it. My mind had dealt with so much death and destruction in one year, it could not take more — my cancer, the death of my friend to cancer, the molested children, and the traffic accident — all of this stress in a very unnurturing environment. I worked for pressured therapists, many of whom just passed it on. Finally, I quit as my mind and body could not take it.

Two months later, a serendipitous event led me to greater understanding of my condition. In the spring, while on a trip to the South, I saw a doctor who was an allergist/nutritionist. Since I had been without any calcium supplements for four days (I had forgotten to pack them), I had rapidly developed 11 bruises on my legs. My thought pattern was racing, as was my speech. This doctor looked to rule out hyperactivity, thyroid problems, and Epstein-Barr virus. He took me off my vitamins and put me on Allergy Research Group vitamins and minerals as well as pancreas, thymus, and adrenal extracts. My irritability became much worse, immediately I had diarrhea for nearly a month and lost six pounds, thus bring my weight down to 95 pounds. All together I lost 18 pounds after stopping chemo—much of this while working for the therapists.

At Christmas my niece had told me she couldn't use citrus as it gave her diarrhea. I found that citrus, too, and rhubarb, and minerals with a citrate negative ion now gave me diarrhea. Then I read in my biochemistry book that there is an enzyme which handles citrus in the body. From science studies I'd done as a senior in high school with tetany and the function of parathyroid glands and the precipitation of calcium with oxalate, etc., and now what I'd learned about citrus and diarrhea and knowing that oxalate would precipitate out calcium in the body, I extrapolated that the citrate ion in my vitamins was causing me to lose calcium and shattering my nerves. I also figured that any foods with oxalate and citrate in them would also cause me to lose my calcium. This mechanism, I thought, must be what is behind my frayed nerves and perhaps the drastic change in emotion. After thinking this out I worked hard to

remove all the foods and elements interfering with my calcium retention, absorption, and utilization—adding vitamins A and D which helped in absorption.

Bruises went away. A scratch on my cheek which did not heal for six days healed immediately when finally I was able to retain my calcium. The cankers in my mouth disappeared over night. My disposition improved tremendously, and the speed of nerve transmission slowed. Getting calcium and retaining it in my body seemed a godsend—an answer to my prayers. More recently I've read in Dr. John Trowbridge's book *The Yeast Syndrome* that insufficient linoleic acid and gamma-linolenic acid will deregulate calcium ions in the blood<sup>8</sup>. (Now I am using primrose oil and flax seed oil to supply essential fatty acids. Only since I started taking these have I been able to reduce my daily 100 mg dose of Diflucan to one tab every third day.)

Since being cognizant of the importance of calcium in my body, I've met several women who have had cancer who say they cannot use citrus. I know that when the body is in good condition, one never knows the calcium precipitates out. Only when in a poor condition do I get acute diarrhea and know that the calcium has been lost. I also suspect that this precipitation of calcium as citrate or oxalate is one factor behind the mood shift in affective disorder, bringing with it a drop in blood sugar and a deficit of calcium to steady the nerves. Another may be moldy foods in my diet that cause the calcium to precipitate out, i.e., buttermilk pancakes gave me acute diarrhea. Moldy foods do bring on the mania phase with boundless energy that must run its course: an extreme example of this is my ingestion of six pieces of a health food (a soybean Kasa tofu mozzarella-like cheese with six Triscuits and two pieces of colby cheese). This "high energy" ran on relentlessly for four hours. Needless to say, overlapping *allergen foods* could keep this mania going endlessly. Besides molds, another factor behind mood changes that I can identify for myself—aggression, anger, grandiosity, tearfulness, etc.—results from foods overlapping in the diet, or too many foods of the same family in sequential days, or from allergic reactions of one kind or another to foods. Tomatoes make me angry; barley, aggressive—if eaten in days following other foods from the gramineae

family—and I can always count on buckwheat to make me cry some time that day. I know that my life has always ebbed and flowed according to the foods I eat.

In my reading, I had never encountered information explaining *how* important calcium is to healing and to good mental health. I now suspect that it is much more than we realize. In fact, perhaps this lack of calcium in the modern diet is behind more than we can guess regarding irritability and short tempers, rapid speech, rude driving and aggressive behaviors, perhaps criminal activity, and even cancer. With the soft drink industry drawing \$47 billion a year for pop and apparently replacing water as the universal beverage for much of our society, it is easy to see that phosphorus may be in high supply, while calcium has been reduced. So, a shortage of calcium in our diet is quite possible.

It is the cancer, however, which really intrigues me. My oncologist tells me that calcium is removed from the diet when there is extensive body pain due to cancer in the bone. This disturbs me since if I get lesions which won't heal on my face and in my mouth, what about the scrapes and tears that occur in the colon and other organs from wear and tear and free radicals. May this be giving cancer a place to start?

Dr. Sampson, the nutritionist/allergist, also found Epstein-Barr virus in my system and told me it was affecting my brain and moods. That may be, as Dr. Philpott in his book *Brain Allergies*<sup>9</sup> says the EBV attacks lymphocytes, which are guardians of the immune system, and the central nervous system's brain and spine since both the lymphocytes and the neurons have similar surface antigens.

Perhaps the EBV and the *Candida* have played a dual role in destruction of my immune system; I know that the chemotherapy took my immune system even lower as an insatiable fungus established itself on my back and in my scalp, and I have more problems with foods and had made some gains before the cancer.

Besides the deficiency of calcium in my body that seems to make my system run in fits and starts, I have this problem of candidiasis. I spoke with a woman in our breast support group who has 18 spots of cancer on her brain—not to mention many other places in her body and asked her what she eats. She said "mostly fruit, no meat." I know for a fact that I cannot eat fruit; it feeds the *Candida*. I get a cloudy mind and frequently feel suicidal if enough *Candida*

"toxins" affect my neurotransmitters and interfere with serotonin. I also have intermittent joint pains and experience low energy levels. Consequently, to control the yeast I eat mostly meat and low carbohydrate vegetables and take extensive vitamin and mineral supplements. I told this woman in our support group to turn her eating around 180 degrees: eat meat and vegetables, no fruits. Food has always been my nemesis. It drives me. It drives my allergies, and it targets my brain. I realize that I still have a mountain to climb to get well, but it is my nature to face a wall and climb over it. I do hope the future brings me success in drying up my *Candida*, and I want to find help in eradicating the Epstein-Barr virus. My objective in all of this is to gain back my T-lymphocytes so I can combat cancer or other pathogens that enter my body and so I can eat more normally. Dr. Monroe, my oncologist, told me of the John Hopkins study for recurrence of breast cancer in women: those with lots of T-lymphocytes don't get recurrence; those who don't...well, they do. I tell my doctors I'm out to buy a bushel of T-lymphocytes. Until this is accomplished, I have work to do. Any doctor who is willing and able to help me is most welcome.

## References

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