

From Standing Still to Moving Forward  
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I struggled writing my recovery story because I have moved into a part of my life where the past is no longer relevant. I could tell you of all the terrible things that I endured -the many hospitals that I was admitted, my struggle with addiction and abuse but I choose not to. I want to tell you my feelings. When I was sick I was lost and angry- oh yes lots of anger. I felt scared. I felt like a square peg in a round hole. I never felt that I fit in. I never felt loved. I never felt confident or worthy or deserving. My emotions and my symptoms blended together so tightly. Treatment appeared hopeless. I had no concept of what recovery was or how to obtain it.

Then a switch was flipped. "It was not your fault" and "This is the diagnosis I think you have" are two phrases that made the difference for me- something that I didn't know existed. It all began to fall in place. People who did not even know me saw something in me. Nobody else including myself saw HOPE.

I fought it. I struggled against it; however, my curiosity kept taking me back asking for more...more tools, more tips, more skills to move forward in recovery. I was hungry for anything I could get my hands on including reading or attending anything that shared hope. I worked very slowly and started learning about Wellness Recovery Action Plans and learning social skills-I desperately needed them. I learned about taking my medications as prescribed by the doctor. I started simply sharing and talking about all the dark secrets and feelings that I had buried and dared not share. In the light of day they lost their power. I emerged a person in recovery strong, confident, compliant, a problem solver, and a social butterfly who picks her battles and tries very hard to listen more and talk less- still working on this. I feel confident and empowered. I see the possibilities in everything. I am not just a diagnosis. I am a Mother and Grandmother. I am a friend. I work a full time job. I live with a mental illness but it does not define who I am. If you are struggling and feel like that round peg in a square hole there is help out there. Contact your local mental health center reach out do not feel you are alone there is hope and there is recovery. I am a person in recovery and my name is Cindy Smith.

