Reflections

The first time we met I was over the moon afterwards because I thought that PRT might actually work. However once I got home and had time to think more I became panicked because I thought that *I* wasn’t strong enough. I should tell you that this idea of me not being strong enough lasted for a while. The second time we met I told you about my concerns but you said that you believed I could do it and I should just try anyway. Also I felt betrayed by my brain for the second time and I wondered why my brain keeps betraying me. I’m really glad that I did try because this has been life changing for me.

The next big hurdle came when I began tapering off the Gabapentin. I was at first really anxious that the pain would be insurmountable but once I began to embrace the pain instead of fighting it the pain became manageable. This took quite a while though to become instinctual. I can remember waking up one morning in late January or early February feeling some pain and immediately hating it. I wondered if I would ever just naturally embrace the pain instead of fighting it. This did happen eventually but only with lots of practice. Looking back there was just a moment when everything clicked and then my default became embracing instead of fighting.

I realized too that the cold is not an enemy like I had previously thought it was. Sometimes during the winter I would put all my energy into just surviving the cold weather but this past winter I learned that many things will warm me up including walking. It was so much easier for me this past winter because when or if I became cold during the day I learned not to panic. I realized that I would always be able to climb into my warm bed at night and that thought alone was comforting. I still don’t like being cold but it doesn’t terrify me like it used to because I know that at night I will always get warm again.

The ability to write and type has been one of the best things truly to come from the PRT. I am no longer afraid to write or especially type. I remember one day when we were meeting and just holding a pen was creating a banging within my arm. I thought I could feel the muscles twitching and then you told me to touch my right arm with my left hand to see if I could feel the muscles twitching. Of course I couldn’t feel anything happening in my right arm and that was when it really clicked that my anxiety was causing the pain not my arm. That was huge for me to understand because after that I began writing regularly. At first even writing in my journal was difficult but I did it anyway with a lot of deep breathing. Then I began typing and now that has become pretty normal too. I still prefer to write in my journal instead of typing because of spelling. However last weekend when I was typing my essay for the behavioral task force I found that typing wasn’t that bad because I could look up the spelling for words I didn’t know on the internet.

Meditation has been something that I continue to work on. I really enjoy the calm that typically comes from meditating. It still doesn’t come naturally to me but when I think what else can I do when I don’t feel great it does come to mind eventually. I know that I need to keep practicing meditation for it to come more naturally.

Exercising has become a natural part of my routine. I didn’t realize how much I missed being active. I have finished two books since January when I began walking. I keep exercising because of the way I feel while I’m doing it and afterwards.

The one thing that took the longest to click for me was to embrace crappy feelings instead of fighting them. It wasn’t until our last meeting that this concept just clicked into place and ever since we met it comes naturally to me to embrace instead of fighting my feelings even when they are crappy. I have no idea why this took so long to click into place but now that it has it has become so much easier to deal especially with the anxiety or anger because I know now that they won’t last forever.

Overall this has been an extremely positive experience and life changing in many ways. Even when you pushed me to do new things (socially) it was ok because by then I could write about it in my journal. I still am not wildly excited about doing new things socially but I continue to venture out into the world despite my misgivings.

You are so super positive all the time which is really encouraging (sometimes enough for five people). I did learn that you like to test everything which can be trying at times. Usually I looked forward to our meetings except for a few times when I felt that I hadn’t done my best because I hadn’t completed the homework. All in all, it was really a good experience I and I am so hugely grateful to you and Jean for helping me.