

Travelling
With
Parkinson's
Disease

By

Colin
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About the Author

Colin Woodcroft is an Australian author, who had his first book, *Time Traveller* published in 2014. Colin lives in the Sutherland Shire in New South Wales with his wife and two of his three children. He is a retired primary school teacher who has written four books since his retirement. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2005 and his second book was written about his experiences with dealing with Parkinson's. Since his diagnoses he has become a gym fanatic, as he searches for ways to combat this crippling disease.

Apart from writing books, Colin also has interests in music, history, playing golf, walking, movies and watching most sports.

Published books to date:

Time Traveller 2014

Living with Parkinson's disease 2014

Songs of my Time 2015

Travelling with Parkinson's disease 2016



Chapter One

Introduction

So you have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease...no big deal. Rubbish! Yes it is a big deal! You'd better believe it. My point is simple- yes it is a serious disease, but once diagnosed you need to accept it and get on with life. Yes it is a 'bummer' of a disease, in fact a shocker but hey, what can you do about it? Precious little. Or can you?

Once you have been diagnosed with it, it is how you deal with it that counts. You basically have two ways to go – you either accept it and positively live with it or you reject it, become depressed and feel sorry for yourself. You can take the high road or the low road. The high road will still have bumps, detours and wrong turns along the way but you will feel the sunshine on your back and every now and then you have a day where you feel you are purring like a Jag. The low road, once you get on it will feel like the clouds are gathering and the skies darkening as you negotiate a series of hairpin bends.

The high road will allow you to get to the top of the mountain and stare down into the valley and see where you have been, while plotting your course for the near future. Sadly while taking the low road you will invariably be surrounded by craggy mountains that are becoming impenetrable as you wallow in the mire.

For me the decision to take the high road or the positive approach to combat Parkinson's disease was easy. At fifty years of age (I was diagnosed at fifty years old) I had a lot of living to do and I was not going to allow this disease to 'cramp my style'. I am a batsman in for the long haul – I have just passed fifty and I am looking at bringing up a century. So I have put on my helmet to protect me from the many and varied bouncers that will be bowled at me. There will be aching, stiff backs, insomnia, tiredness, a struggle with fine motor skills just to name a few. But my aim is to block as many problems as possible and to do my own attacking at these obstacles.

Put simply I have things to do and places to go and this disease is not going to stop the train from getting through! So strap yourself in, tighten your belt and join me in a ride that will certainly hit some barriers, but will also put a smile upon our faces as we keep living our lives and meeting challenges.

Chapter Two

Facts, Fiction and Fantasy

Let's get a few things straight about Parkinson's disease

Facts

- I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2005
- Life is harder having Parkinson's
- Everything changes once you have Parkinson's
- I wish I didn't have Parkinson's
- The disease and its symptoms will impact on my lifestyle
- Parkinson's is a debilitating disease
- A balanced medication can steady the disease
- The effects of Parkinson's is different for each individual
- There is no cure for the disease at present
- The progress of the disease is different for each patient
- Some sufferers can benefit from a head operation
- Anyone, male or female, young or old can get the disease
- The symptoms of Parkinson's can be very frustrating
- My symptoms have deteriorated a little over ten years

- I can still perform all functions necessary for my lifestyle.
- I sometimes forget to take my medication
- My medication keeps me on an even keel
- I need a support group (family & friends) even though I can manage everything myself
- A sense of humour will help you cope with the disease
- Depression can engulf you, so be aware
- Above all a positive attitude is essential to hold the disease at bay

Fiction

- There is a cure for Parkinson's disease
- Nothing changes once diagnosed with Parkinson's
- Having Parkinson's is no big deal.
- The disease and symptoms won't get any worse
- I don't care that I have Parkinson's
- I can still do everything fine, regardless of having Parkinson's
- Parkinson's disease is hereditary
- Mainly men catch the disease
- Most people won't get Parkinson's until they are 70 years old
- Only weak people get the disease
- Most people would recognise someone with Parkinson's because of how they walk.

- A cure for Parkinson's is 'just around the corner'
- I remember to take my medication three times a day on time
- As long as you take your medication you will be fine (medication will certainly help but it won't cure you)
- I can handle Parkinson's by myself – I don't need any help
- If you get Parkinson's your life is virtually over
- You will have trouble walking with Parkinson's
- You won't be able to work if you have Parkinson's (it depends on your type of work and the severity of the disease – I worked for about 6 years with it)