

My name is Lara, I am 47 and I live in Essex.

I am a loving wife, dedicated mother, crazy cockapoo owner and fellow chronic pain warrior.

My journey began when I was 14 with a stiff lower back and pain. I lost a decade of my life to physical limitations and negative thoughts as I struggled through the system to get a diagnosis.

I then lost another decade of my life after diagnosis as I worked my way through the different levels of medication types and strengths, coping with side effects and low mood and then eventually the time came when my body became used to the drugs and I would need to find an alternative.

Weeks off work, weeks in bed or on the sofa with total fatigue and brain fog topped off with the added bonuses of thumb joint replacement surgery, costochondritis and nearly losing my marriage.

Feeling as low as I could possibly feel and convinced my life was now pre-written and I was out of choices and options, I was dealt another blow.

Whilst using a very strong drug that was working for me (despite the mental trauma each time I needed to inject) I was diagnosed with Malignant Melanoma.

The Rheumatologist advised me I'd need to stop the medication until that episode of my life was over. So there I was, back to square one. Feeling on my own, feeling lost and with no hope.

I had had the support of the marvellous NHS, family and friends but that day I felt so alone. My mind racing with negative thoughts, my chest pounding with negative emotions and my entire body sweating with fear of the unknown future.

How would I be able to function?

What kind of future was there for me now that my chronic pain condition, called Ankylosing Spondylitis, would have the time and freedom to do its thing without the medication to hold it at bay?

I sunk even lower than I had before. Somewhere I never want to go again. Despair set in.

It was in that dark moment, when I realized that I may not be able to control what is happening to me, but I certainly can control how I handle it and feel about it.

I had a choice, and I wanted the option to take back control.

I began a long five-year journey of self-discovery and new learnings and here I am a qualified life coach who uses amazing tools to overcome obstacles in my own life and who teaches others how to do the same so that they can have the life they want and deserve.

Through the techniques and strategies, I can control my thoughts, and my emotions which in turn allow me to take positive empowering actions and get the results I aim for.