

The warmth of the sun

Dave talks about his journey to wellness...

My story is about a journey no one would choose to take. But I think it demonstrates that with the right people around you, there is always hope. No matter how dark the dawn looks, the light and the joy from the heat of the sun will return.

Three years ago, due to the pressures I'd created in both my working and private life; I suffered a major nervous break down. This was a total shut down. I was taking myself to bed, not wanting to function or even face the daylight. Life seemed to be over and no matter how hard I tried, by myself, I could not function.

After several weeks at home, I managed to get myself to my doctor who immediately referred me to a respite service run by Pathways in Porirua. I was not a model patient, but the staff put up with me. Day and night they were there for me, slowly helping me find my way. They were always supportive and encouraging. Bit by bit I began to function again. There was a huge hole in my life. I'd lost my way in the business world and I had very limited family contact and support. Pathways stepped in to help fill this role. I believe it took me about twice as long as it should have, but there was never any pressure to leave.

After about three months I was able to function well enough to move out on my own again. It was a very difficult task, but I had wonderful support from my Pathways support worker who was always there. Pathways helped me find accommodation, go shopping, get involved in social activities and more. Life started to move forward.

Once I was settled in an established flat, Pathways was there for me again. This time supporting me to find work. BP Porirua took me on and I was able to support myself again. Life was still difficult, but I was functioning. During this time I'd also been getting support from the Wesley Community Action Group in Cannons Creek. I was asked if I would be interested in running their food bank. I agreed and saw it as a chance to pay back the Porirua community for all the wonderful and non-judgmental support and love I have received. I still run the food bank.

After eighteen months I applied for my current job as litter control officer with Porirua City Council. I got the job and am really enjoying it. My role is evolving all the time. I still do some part time work at BP too. I have met some wonderful people, one or two special ones, who are wonderful to me and give me purpose and pleasure in life.

Things are a long way away from when I just wanted it all to end. The world I now live in is also a long way from the materialistic world I had spent most of my life chasing. But it's also more loving and meaningful.

I've learnt lessons along the way too. No matter how dark the dawn, there is hope – but you have to let people in. I was very lucky to come across such a caring and dedicated organisation as Pathways and their wonderful staff. Yes, I do miss parts of my old world but the new one has taught me so much about caring, loving and just plain living.

When I was ill, if someone had said to me "you will get over this, there is hope and a future." I would have screamed. But they would have been right on it. There is hope. There is pleasure. Even if it's just the warmth of the sun and wonderful company.

Thank you Pathways.
David. B Redmayne

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