

My Story 003

Since March 2007, Stitchlinks have been asking people to tell us their Story, and also asking whether knitting and stitching has been helpful to them.

All Stories are voluntarily offered and anonymity is guaranteed. Only once we have been given permission do we publish so that others can appreciate, take inspiration and draw comfort from them.

This booklet is one of a series that contains a small selection taken at random from the long list of Stories we have received. Each is reproduced as it was entered on the online survey form, with the only exception of taking out any way that individuals can be identified.

Read at your leisure and be fascinated, comforted, thrilled, encouraged and inspired.

You are not alone.

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Story 111

“...enables my hands to be busy while my mind flows free...”

Having flirted with knitting as a child, I had not really enjoyed it and moved onto other art work and music, the art took a back seat as working full time took over.

However when I fell pregnant with my second child I developed carpal tunnel syndrome that made it impossible for me to play my beloved flute and piano. My music was my therapy and I was lost without them. I was coping with a demanding 18 month old, renovating a house, working part time, and then after the birth of my son I also developed post natal depression.

I started knitting in pregnancy - funnily enough my wrists allowed this - and have not stopped since. It has taken over from music in being my therapist, my home. The rhythmic clicking, and knowledge that I am creating a beautiful object for someone I love help me to remember who I am as a person other than 'mummy'. The knitting enables my hands to be busy while my mind flows free, sorting through my problems of the day. If I was not knitting I get bogged down and absorbed in my trail of thought, but knitting enables free-flowing and restorative thought.

If ever I am feeling stressed or low I reach for my needles and am soon feeling uplifted. Knitting enables me to channel my emotions into the garment I am creating, and helps turn negative emotions round to positive ones.

Story 113

“...takes me into a world which leaves all the anxiety behind...”

I have been prone to depression/anxiety episodes since the mid-1970's, but during the last 10 years they have increased in frequency.

I am currently on medication and counselling for depression but the main disruption to a normal life is an over-riding anxiety, but I don't know the reason underlying it. It particularly focuses on one of my dogs who is elderly and has some health problems, but also a feeling of being overwhelmed by all sorts of things, important and minor. It means I don't accomplish anything, which leads to a feeling of drifting and being more over-whelmed by life in general.

I enjoy gardening, but the real need is to feel I have done something creative. I find even casting on a row of stiches, trying a sample square, stitching a small section of a cross stitch kit or freestyle or just trying out stitches on a practice fabric takes me into a world which leaves all the anxiety behind and afterwards I feel elated if exhausted, and shaking more than usual!

Story 106

"...I now resort to knitting or chrochet instead of hitting the biscuit tin..."

In 2005 I had a period off sick with stress when I went back to eating.

Also at that time I was into Patchwork & Quilting but I found that I couldn't decide on what colours to work with and found that knitting with a random brightly coloured yarn fulfilled my desire for colour without having to make mind stretching decisions which I found difficult at that time. I still had some difficulty with counting stitches and so used the larger thicker wool that was in fashion at then. Knitting has also brought me so many new friends! and I now dont feel that there I am on my own.

Since recovering but still with a lot of weight to loose I now resort to knitting or chrochet instead of hitting the biscuit tin or choc bar!!

Story 119

"...it brings me an enormous boost in self esteem..."

I knitted years ago and stopped when my children were little. No time, too expensive etc. I became severely depressed in October 2003. I was very ill indeed.

I attend a charity run centre for adults with mental health peoblems. They started a knitting club in late '05 and I wondered, considering my poor concentration if I could manage to have a go again. I ploughed straight in with a jumper and have got the knitting bug BIG style! It has helped so much with the depression . It is so meditative. I sit and knit and am lost in my own quiet world. it brings me an enormous boost in self esteem, making beautiful garments, bags and shawls that people praise.

I have now developed Fibromyalgia and the pain and loss of lifestyle has had a huge impact on my feelings of self worth and I have been battling the depression again. Even when I feel absolutely exhausted and am in terrible pain I know I can sit and knit even if I can only manage a few knit and pearl rows and this helps me to forget the pain for a while. When I feel low because that day I am housebound I know I have knitting to do which lifts my sprirts and gives me a 'raison d'etre'

Fibromyalgia effects my short term memory and concentration. recently at the day centre I attend, I was bemoaning the fact that I'd messed up several appointments that week and how useless I was etc. I had with me a bag I am particularly proud of that I have knitted,all the women at the centre had been ooing and aaahing at it, One lady said to me, 'How can you say you are useless and have no concentration when you can make something a wonderful as that bag?!'. This obviously made my head swell and made me feel incredibly good about myself and made me think. Knitting has enabled me to challenge my own steryotypes about myself. I cant be useless if I can knit even a simple scarf. my concentration cant be that bad if I can knit lace and socks and complicated patterns etc.

Recently my psychologist asked me to knit something freeform to represent all the anger and frustration I feel at the way the Fibromyalgia has impacted on my life. I refused as knitting is so positive and so meditative and is sometimes the only joy I have that i didnt want it 'tainted' with that negative association.

I've made friends via knitting forums and as there are no decent yarn shops near me and if I am stuck in the house I often browse the web looking at yarns on-line imagining the feel of them! I am a true knitaholic and even order wool in secret on line and time it to arrive when hubby is at work then hide it!!! I have several projects on the go and many more in the pipeline , plus 2 cupboards bursting at the seams with yarn! I have discovered the true meaning of SEX!! (stash enhancing exercise!) and made a serious dent in my bank balance. I also have a healthy knitting book collection.

I can seriously say that knitting has helped me in every way to cope with the negatives that life has thrown at me in the last few years. Talking of which, I'm off to carry on with a lace card!

Story 9

"...knitting helped calm my thoughts and... it was easier to put my own mind in order."

For many years I suffered from severe social anxiety disorder. I ended up dropping out of school and could not hold a job for more than two days. I kept myself socially isolated. I knew how to knit and crochet at this time, having come from a family where those two techniques are taught at a young age, but it wasn't something I did seriously.

Then around two years ago I started to get more into knitting. I took a job knitting fashion scarves for a woman who sold them to boutiques. I found that knitting helped calm my thoughts and while I was knitting and putting stitches in order it was easier to put my own mind in order.

I'm now married and living in a large city where I'm no longer keeping myself socially isolated. Even knitting in public has helped, as people notice what you're doing and are interested, bringing around social interaction. Having something to do with my hands that is calming helps me deal with a lot of issues from my past stemming from my social anxiety disorder.

Telling Your Story helps others to appreciate their own circumstances. Please help by completing the survey at www.Stitchlinks.com