

My Story 007

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 198

“Knitting has helped me to tune out...”

Not so much a story (more a way of life).

Knitting has helped me to tune out football, cricket, etc, every Saturday for all my married life, which is forty-five years, unless I have been studying for a degree as I am at the moment. It has clothed my children, grandchildren, my friends, my family and myself. It is part of a creative way of life which is sadly disappearing, along with dressmaking, my other hobby/way of life.

I look back with fondness on the privilege of being able to make so many things for my kids, starting with baby nighties and ending with bridesmaids dresses. hope you can kick start this great needlework movement. xxxxxxx

Story 83

“My stitching relieves my stress and anxiety.”

I have been stitching for over twenty years.

There were a few years when I didn't stitch and there was a notable difference in my behavior. I have a very stressful job and until recently had a very disagreeable co-worker. If I were not able to stitch on my lunch hour or come home to stitch in the evenings, I am sure I would be on anti-depressants by now. My doctor has suggested them in the past but I hold out to not take them.

My stitching relieves my stress and anxiety. I stitch before going to bed and it relaxes me to get a decent night's sleep. I also have arthritis and the stitching keeps my fingers from becoming stiff.

Story 30

"...As I have got better my stitching has become integral to my recovery "

When I was 19 after a tough but enjoyable first year of uni I went down with severe glandular fever which then led to acute hepatitis.

This illness then caused additional mental strain, I have suffered from depression before but my being so seriously ill plunged me further into depression. For the first three months I was ill I couldn't really get out of bed but the following six months when I was more mobile was the time when my stitching really came into play.

I could move around slowly but was not yet able to leave the house - at this stage it was just so nice to be able to achieve something whilst still being so unable in the rest of my life. As I have got better over the past two years my stitching has become integral to my recovery. Whether I am physically tired or feeling mental strain my stitching has not once failed to improve my situation.

I have tried to list below all the ways in which I feel my stitching has benefitted me: *Confidence & Achievement* - from feeling hopeless and helpless (when I physical could not "do" and when my self-esteem was at a low) stitching reminds me of what I can do.

Enjoyment - the dangerous thing about illness especially mental is that you start to get used to feeling bad you forget what it's like to enjoy yourself or it just feels so far away from where you are. Stitching brings me so much enjoyment that at one point I thought I'd never feel. I keep my stitching things out in full view to remind me to do some and have some fun.

Calm - there is something really special about the time when your hands are busy but your head isn't - for an anxious depressive still working through her therapy my stitching was a Godsend. The rest of the time you're worrying catastrophising mulling over every bad thing you can think of but when stitching it's as if that part is switched off. The calm feeling also lasts beyond my stitching time - it gets rid of the nastiness that can fly round in your mind so you can just be yourself. I think anything that helps a me be the best version of me and the happiest is pretty good!

Stimuli - this might sound odd and this was more obvious when I was very ill but I definitely want to mention it. I use dto find the colours and the textures of my stitching really enchanting it would always make me smile. When you suffer from depression the whole world - your life - is dull and upsetting when you go through therapy and the problems causing your depression are worked on you start to see the world like you never have - I became more attentive more interested since I was no longer weighed down or enslaved by problems.

When I started to get better I noticed that this "colour" or "outlook" I was seeing everywhere I had seen in my stitching. Whatever it was that provided me with fresh eyes and a better perspective in therapy my stitching had also helped me gain earlier on - on a smaller scale but whilst life wasn't so good my stitching became sanctuary. Aside from prayer I have yet to find anything that has such positive effects on my mental health. I try to do some each day to provide my mind with a break. "

Story 177

“...I have had a wonderful change in my mental attitude...”

From email Dear Betsan, I have just read the article in Simply Knitting about the survey you have been working on about knitting and chronic pain. I am not sure how extensive you are doing this research but I live in the USA and am a disabled person living with chronic pain and disability of not being able to walk much due to a back injury and rheumatoid arthritis.

I have recently began knitting and have completed several projects and have had a wonderful change in my mental attitude since finding the benefits of this craft.

If you are doing any research outside of your general area I would be open to helping with this survey/research. Sincerely, xxxxxxxxxx

Story 74

“...if you have cross stitch ... you can get lost in a whole different world...”

when you run a house hold people think that you can automaticly cope with everything thats thrown at you, and many times I've found that if I have been stressed through things that have gone wrong during the day ,it might be not sticking to a diet, or being so much pain where every bone in your body hurts , or you are up all night because of pain , if you have cross stitch or any craft you can get lost in a whole different world

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