

My Story 017

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 136

“focusing so intently on the sewing seemed to help me cope ..”

I had a spinal fusion due to a condition called Kyphosis. especially . I had a lot of post surgery complications. My lungs collapsed then part of the fusion didn't take so i had to have a revision also i got an infection which, only cleared up after surgery to remedy it.

During this i was pretty much bed bound. I was in a lot of pain and was restricted to the house. Also i had to have hospital appointments every week to monitor the infection. Most of these appointments were emergency fitting in's so it would not be unusual to wait around for at least 6 hours whilst they got blood test results back. I found i was getting very depressed and frustrated and i found filling the hours in the day very hard.

At one point i got so low that i think if i could have got out of bed i would have seriously thought about ending it all. I felt that i couldn't cope with the constant boredom and if i had to endure any more day time tele i would go mad. I seriously think this was affecting my recovery .

Thankfully my auntie introduced me to something called cross stitch. At first i thought the idea of me sewing was ridiculous and expected to do bad at it as i was never really a craft orientated person. I could never sit still for long enough but now that had changed, i was running out of things to fill up the day so i gave it a go.

I started on a dolphin kit which, being my favourite animal, helped to keep me interested. I found the hours ticked by when i was sewing. And strange as it sounds even though my pain was still there, focusing so intently on the sewing seemed to help me cope with it and it didn't seem as bad. And thankfully it filled up them tedious hours spent waiting at the hospital appointments.

My initial surgery was in may 2003. And in July 05 i had to have a revision of the fusion. I went armed with a kit to keep me going as 3 days i was bedbound. I found this time around that i didn't get depressed following the surgery and although it was hard to sew due to the various needles in my hand i found a way round it. Us crafters are very resourceful. As soon as i was up and about i introduced cross stitch to fellow patients and they all seemed intrested in it.

The surgery has left me with a lot of problems and pain but now i have cross stitch to fill my days so when i'm having a bad day and the pain is getting me down i whip out my sewing and before i know it the day has flew by and it's like the pain was never there.

I have since displayed some work in the local libary and i got good feedback which gave me a confidence boost. I highly recommend any craft like cross stitch for therapy and i think it should be perscribed on the NHS. I dream of the day i can go to the doctors and get a perscription for aida and thread rather than the normal cocktail of pain killers i have to take. The medical authoritys should recognise it as therapy. I am hoping to voulenteer in a center for people who suffer with mental health problems and i am already planning to introduce cross stitch.

Story 207

“it opens another world where different things matter”

A chance to unwind. You forget about all the stresses for the day when you focus on a cross stitch... it opens another world where different things matter.

Story 132

“My stitching allows me to “break the rules”....”

I am an attorney. A few years ago, I suffered job burnout. I had neither the time nor the luxury of a sabbatical, and I was on the verge of quitting my job (or getting fired for losing it at work).

A friend of mine suggested I find a hobby and recommended knitting. I cross-stitched as a teen (my mom made me - I love her for it now), so I had an interest in the idea. I attended a stitch 'n bitch session and was hooked.

Curiously the knitting teacher noted that I was stressed out not my friend. Apparently the tightness of my knits and purls gave me away. She noted that I was so stressed I had a hard time getting my needle through the yarn because I was pulling so tightly.

As I knitted more my rows became looser. I decided to try the concept on cross-stitching to see if it had the same result. It did.

I am now 18 months into my "rehabilitation." I have as many stitching projects as I have cases. My stitching allows me to "break the rules" I am required to maintain at work.

I keep myself to no deadlines; I promise no finished pieces to anyone; I work on whatever piece strikes me at the time; and I do NOT aim for perfection in my pieces. It is a natural relaxation for which I am grateful to my friends and my mom for sharing with me.

Story 133

“...watching the picture grow and develop gave a sense of achievement that was unobtainable in my everyday life..”

I began cross-stitching about ten years ago. At that time I was caring for my ten-year-old daughter, who had just been diagnosed with Insulin Dependent Diabetes and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and for my twelve-year-old son, who was a keen footballer and playing for a local Centre of Excellence.

As a single parent, whose ex-partner worked abroad, I found myself caught between the two different sets of needs. I spent hours at home when my daughter was unwell and off school, but also had to travel three or more times a week to training sessions and matches with my son. I didn't work at that time, and my life seemed to revolve around the children's needs. I tried to study, but found that the constant interruptions and worry completely disrupted my concentration.

I have always loved colour and texture, and one day I spotted a cross-stitch magazine in the newsagents which had an appealing free gift, so I bought it.

The stitching was both absorbing and soothing, and the colours satisfying. It required some concentration to work from the chart; each stitch needed to be formed accurately and neatly, and watching the picture grow and develop gave a sense of achievement that was unobtainable in my everyday life. At least, I felt, I could do this right!

It was also something that I could pick up and put down when I needed to. Cross-stitch continued to sustain me, at hospital, football training, all over the place. I also moved into embroidery, both by hand and machine and then I discovered patchwork and quilting - but that's another story...

However, I would not have had the confidence to exhibit my quilt at the Festival of Quilts last year if I had not begun to stitch my way out of unhappiness about ten years ago.

Story 135

“...crochet got me going again.. “

Crochet took me (travelling alone for the first time) to America in 1997, to enter the International Crochet Awards in New Jersey. Coming second proved to me that I was creative - something I had never considered before.

When work related stress got too much and I suffered a serious depression, crochet got me going again, producing interesting garments from simple rectangular shapes. This led eventually to me becoming (part-time) self employed, supplying crochet hoks, books cottons and workshops, along with my first invitation to write a crochet book.

This boosted my confidence enough to enter a knitting competition - to be screened on the BBC, as part of the 'Great British village Show ' series.

Story 137

“. Stitching allows me to achieve something constructive..”

Stitching has helped me to live with ME.

At the moment there is no effective treatment or cure for ME, you just have to adapt to living with it and within the limits it imposes on you. Stitching allows me to achieve something constructive and creative while developing new skills and keeping my brain active.

I have been able to widen my circle of friends and contacts through classes, internet activities and interest groups related to textiles and stitching. Very little equipment is needed, at least to start with, and my stitchwork is mostly portable, can be done at any time and it is easy to stop and start when it suits me.

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