



## **Recreation (enjoying yourself!) with MS**

### **Dan Melfi**

My wife and I would walk our dogs and we, we trained dogs. We were with dogs and I worked 'em day in and day out. And then all of a sudden that was over. And I would sit on my patio watching my wife and our dogs go down the path. And I'd just sit there going, you know, what has happened? This is ridiculous. When I got the scooter it was took the physical demand off me. It was, I could go at walking speed so whatever speed my wife was walking at, I could stay with her. I can have a conversation with my wife. The benefit of that is now I get to be outside emotionally and mentally it's great, you know? I'm out, I'm feeling the sun, I'm feeling the wind, I look at the environment. I'm living.

### **Karen Melfi**

And it just feels good getting outside. It's just a great way to get out and-and enjoy the sunshine, enjoy the-the beautiful sunsets and, um, bump into an occasional neighbor or dog or two. It just opened up a whole new world. And-and I think he-he enjoys it a lot more than he-he expected to.

### **Dan Melfi**

There's an embarrassment whether it's the wheelchair, whether it's crutches. Sometimes you just have to say this is the way my life is and not worry about it and move on.

## **Lisa Kemppainen, LFMC**

Leisure activities are important with MS because they give us time to enjoy life and to experience pleasure. Some examples of leisure and recreation activities would be anything that brings you pleasure so walking your dog, watching a movie, playing a game with your kid, whatever it is that allows you to feel like you're having fun. You gain the sense that you haven't lost your life and that you're still participating in your life in a way that feels good to you.

When I realized that MS was going to change the way that I used my body in the world it was depressing and I was really sad. I think I had--much of my identity was about a person who was able-bodied and I was really proud of my accomplishments. It took a while to figure out how to do something different and recognize that there were still options available to me. The ability to use different equipment that allow me to do that and say use a scooter that allows me to go to a festival has been really, really important. Riding a bike has always been something that's been really fun for me and i did a lot as a kid. And I no longer with balance issues could ride a bike. I wasn't able to dismount without crashing and so the idea that I was on a recumbent bike and, um, I could easily dismount was really, really a great option.

## **Shawna Kemppainen**

We really try to focus on enjoying some of those simple things that we can still get out and do together. It might not be every day that we get to, to hop on the bike and go for a ride or go for a drive into the mountains and you know, sit by a river and have a picnic or something. Just everything that we are able to do, I will admit even, yes sometimes folding laundry together, just can be “hey lets, yeah let’s do that” and we will pick a movie and we will watch.

## **Judy Boone**

My boys are very fun to be with, in the kitchen. Um, they are very curious about what I'm doing. And they are eager to do anything in the kitchen that I will allow them to do. And so it's kind of fun for them to watch and see that, you know, this is work. When we're home with the boys, um, we, um, play, they throw the football outside or play basketball, or, um, sometimes we just around and talk as a family and a lot of times we watch movies together as a family. Going outside to play basketball with my boys is a lot of fun. Just being able to be out there and to be active with them. They love it when I come outside. And sometimes they'll even say, mom, can you come outside and play basketball with us? And when I can do that I love it. It gives me a lot of joy.

### **Dan Melfi**

It's part of our culture in my, my family to fish. We like to stream fish. It's gonna be tough for me to stream fish from now on. Probably gonna have to lake fish. Uh, where I'm in a chair and, uh, where I can have everything right there. I still can fish, I have to adapt to what I can do and what I can't do. I have a coat, a fishing coat. And in that is everything I need. My fly book, um, bait, uh, bug spray. Uh, everything's there but it, I can carry it. I'm still getting the hook in the water. Once you get in the chair and you start casting you're, you're fishing. You sit back and you look at, you look at life and it's like, wow, this is pretty cool.

### **Lisa Kemppainen**

Recreation allows us to just stop thinking about MS and just have fun. Um, I think it makes us feel closer to one another. I think it challenges us to think about how to be creative to do things as a family. It gives us a chance to enjoy each other in a way that MS isn't always right in the forefront.

### **David Altman**

I've been playing the guitar since the 4th grade. My parents and my friends, uh, going to school we had a little band. And I just kept playing the guitar from then. I'm actually on a children's book with my sister. She's a school teacher. I draw kind of animated cartoon, uh, characters, you know. So I do art and I do my music, and I workout. And, uh, I love my dogs.

## **Lisa Kemppainen**

Traveling is something that I really love to do and plan on doing for the rest of my life. I had taken my son scuba diving one time before and promised him we'd go so we went. I researched different scuba diving agencies down there and I found an agency that actually works with disabled people. And 40 feet under I was next to a sea turtle and I have no symptoms when I'm under water. We spent the entire week just laughing and we just deal with it. We just do what we have to do and if it means taking a wheelchair to the beach then we take a wheelchair to the beach. We just do it.

## **Izak Green**

It was great to see my mom be able to move just like everybody else.

## **Dan Melfi**

I never was a great skier but I enjoyed skiing. And I had a chance to ski under the, um, can do program in Vail, Colorado. And they, uh, asked me if I wanted to do adaptive skiing and I said, uh, yeah, I'd like to try it and see what I can do. And, um, it was, it was kick. That was so much fun. You know, it's one of things you just, you're, you're on skis and you're like, wow, I'm up here. And it was snowing and it was, it was so euphoric. I'm just loving it going, wow, I'm actually doing this again. Uh, that's, that was fun and that was, you know, don't close your doors, uh, you know, on certain things. You know, be open to it. Uh, you got people who are experts that they're gonna help. Take the opportunity and do it.

## **Lisa Kemppainen**

I think recreation, absolutely, helps with all parts of yourself. It helps with family connection. It helps with you being connected to yourself. It can produce intellectual stimulation and it actually makes you feel more connected to the world at large. You still have lots of your life that brings you pleasure and happiness and that you can enjoy yourself that MS doesn't have to, doesn't have to take that from you.

