

Dr. Keller:

I feel as if I have led two lives: one life before knowing you and your staff, and another life that started with the incredible treatment I received at your office.

The life before knowing you was pretty normal. I had a typical childhood in a family of nine children. I had all the normal childhood illnesses. My only dental problem was having an "eye" tooth pulled out because it resembled a fang when I was 12. I did the normal high school, trade school, got married, had kids, etc. Between the ages of 26 and 27, I began having headaches and asked my family doctor about it. He gave me some nerve pills and told me I needed to calm down. Then I went to my OB Dr. and he tested to see if the headaches could be caused from female or hormone problems. I had a hysterectomy. I felt great for about 6 months until the headaches returned. I tried a Chiropractor for a while. I even asked my dentist, at the time, and he said we could try a splint, but he really didn't know too much about the ortho corrections.

I went to an orthodontists who said he couldn't find anything wrong enough to cause the headaches I was having. Meantime, I'm trying to work part time, be a mom, and a wife and live normal. I would take any pain reliever I could find, and more and more of it. I went to a neurologist that my MD referred me to. How wonderful! He did some tests and gave me some vallium to go with the librium I was already taking. He referred me to a pain center where I learned mind control...I learned self-hypnosis, bio-feedback techniques to control my pain. I was a very good student and made myself a dangerous patient, I've learned. By this time, I had seen 32 different doctors, dentists and two orthodontists, chiropractors and even a shrink!

I was definitely at wit's end. I went to the library and came home with a stack of self-help books. After a few days, I came across an interesting test with popsicle sticks. Break popsicle sticks in half and place them between your upper and lower teeth and bite down. I did receive some relief. I had to find a dentist that knew about those ortho treatments with splints. So, I looked up the ADA and found you, Dr. Keller.

The first time I met you, I remember telling you that I was going to leave your office and jump off a very large bridge. You didn't hesitate to tell me you could help. You also told me your help would be unconventional at times and people would say you were a "quack". I said I had already been to the quacks so you must know something that they don't. Having been told I was nuts for about 5 years, I figured at this point, that if you told me you were considered a little weird, you would be able to do what all those other doctors didn't want to take the time to do.

I think another convincing statement you made to me was the fact that my problem by that time, were bigger than you. It would take kind of a holistic approach to get me better. I would have to trust you and your referrals to other doctors and therapists. I would have to believe that we were on the right track as I began to get relief. I was crazy enough from the pain to agree to almost anything you said. After trying all the previous, obvious, medical treatments, I meet a Dr. who is actually honest enough to tell me he will probably, no, likely to be criticized by his peers for treatment I would need. In the beginning, I don't know how I functioned with so much pain. After dealing with pain for years, you

begin to think your muscles are bones, and you are just going to learn to live and hurt. The look on your staff's faces as they watched me letting you shoot my head to numb the pain was priceless. As weird as it seemed, you and your staff led me to believe it was not the norm. This was only one of the many times in the beginning that I felt as a patient you would do the right thing, and find the right professionals in the holistic circle who would be pioneers in the treatment of my ailments. It took a couple visits and visits with a chiropractor, and physical therapist to see some relief. I was so excited to be able to get through the day only taking one nap instead of three. The treatments were slow and methodical and actually brought relief little by little. I actually felt the muscles in my face and neck that I thought were bones. I have probably had every kind of ortho appliance at one time or another or the same time. I allowed you to do whatever you thought would help. The idea of having braces at the age of 32 wasn't very appealing. I knew after about 6 months of your treatments that we were on to something. By this time, I had talked to several people, professionals included, that thought I was psycho and so were you. That was OK because we knew progress was being made and there was a name for what I had that other doctors either didn't know or didn't want to deal with. TMJ is such a simple name for such an involved problem. I had no idea you had to fight with insurance companies for payment. I definitely received an education as to the do's and don'ts of the insurance empire.

After 5 years and yes, several referrals to a whole list of new doctors, I was headache free most of the time. I knew that I would have a perpetual account in your office. It took almost 3 to 4 more years to work with all the complications of dealing with physical, dental, and mental problems for the number of years I did. After a few times regressing, I have learned the effects of the TMJ condition will always be with me. Even now, if I have a headache, which I rarely do, I have to stop and think if I'm clenching or grinding my teeth or is it just a headache.

You asked me to write a letter. I couldn't do it so I wrote a short story instead. If my story can help just one other person from going through what I did, it will be worth the time it took to write it. There just are not enough "Thank You"'s in this world to give you so I will continue to refer patients and educate as many people as I can. I KNOW doctors become doctors to help people and that it is your job. I BELIEVE that there are times of "divine intervention" in a person's life and that those of us lucky enough to acknowledge it have an automatic desire to enlighten others of your courage and conviction.

You have truly given me a second life and I sincerely thank you, my Dr., my friend.

Judy H