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# Prescriptions From A Former Patient

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## Prescriptions From A Former Patient

by **Evvy McDonald, R.N., M.S., M.Div.**

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**Evvy McDonald, R.N., M.S., M.Div.**, former intensive and coronary care director, knows what dealing with a "terminal illness" is all about. In the 1980s she was diagnosed with ALS, which progressed until she was a "bowl of jello in a wheelchair." After her recovery from ALS, she conducted a medical research project on the mind-body-spirit connection in ALS. Today she has left the health arena and is in service as a Methodist minister, leaving behind a legacy of [ALS articles and resources](#) that offer science and inspiration to those dealing with serious health conditions.

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The American Holistic Health Association has compiled a collection of self-help articles to support your efforts to enhance your own health and well-being.

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This article is part of the article category [HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE FOR DEALING WITH AN ILLNESS](#) and the sub-category [DIAGNOSIS-NOW WHAT?](#)

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At some time in your life you are likely to experience an illness. Illness and health are a duality that is part of life. So is life and death. When illness crosses your life path, don't panic. Don't ignore it. Do acknowledge it. Do accept it. Do begin to discover the messages it carries.

I learned a great deal through my own journey from death's door to dynamic wellness (by which I mean a state of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical wholeness). The "prescriptions" that emerged include:

***Don't get caught in the tangling web of why.*** The search for the explanation and meaning of your illness can lead to frustration and desperation and can paralyze your ability to make decisions and take action.

***Treat the critical symptoms first; look for insights later.*** Use whatever treatment is most appropriate for you and is in line with your own integrity - be it surgery or visualization or antibiotics. No one treatment is more "holistic" than another. Choose what works for you.

***Release all expectations of how it will turn out.*** Your body may heal completely - or not at all. You may find that a wheelchair, cane, walker or crutches becomes an integral part of your daily life. That does not determine whether or not you live in a state of wellness.

***Let go of guilt and look inside.*** Getting ill is not a failure. Illness has a message which we need to understand and listen to - when the time is right. Once the broken leg has been put in a cast, the cancer therapy initiated, and the virus stopped, it is time to take a good honest look at your life and to evaluate the message.

In the days of the early Greeks, a messenger would be sent to the emperor with news of the current battle. If the news was bad, the messenger would be killed. Your task is not to kill the messenger of illness by ignoring it, complaining about it or simply suppressing the symptoms. YOUR task is to carefully examine your life, observing and searching for those discordant areas where harmony, fulfillment or love are lacking. Which parts of your life are less than fulfilling? What thoughts are less than unconditionally loving? Which areas of your life are life enhancing and which are death enhancing? See yourself as clearly as you can - see who, what, and how you are, in reality, living your life. Keep in mind these four very important points:

1. Be honest with yourself - 100 percent.

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2. Be willing to recognize any life pattern or belief that is illness-producing.
3. Take your time. Be thorough in looking at all your strongly-held thoughts, opinions, beliefs and attitudes.
4. **DON'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO WALLOW IN GUILT!**

**List those aspects of your life that you are willing to change.** Look at your job - is it stressful? What about your relationships? Are you willing to make changes in these areas? Are you willing to live the beliefs you say you hold? Remember, it is all right to say No - to decide not to change. The key is in being honest and not feeling guilty.

**After (and only after) these steps comes the time to take action.** Remember the preceding points - then act. It is no longer enough to say you are "willing" to alter your life course. This is the moment to begin, to stop sitting back and waiting for something to happen. *You* are the happener. You are the only one who can create a state of health and dynamic wellness.

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This material was originally in a pamphlet "What To Do When Facing an Illness" created by the [American Holistic Medical Association \(AHMA\)](#).