

Overcoming Depression with NLP: A Case Study

When I first met Belinda she was a very unhappy woman. In her words, "I was spiralling out of control. I'd almost given up. I didn't think it was possible to change." She had been taking anti-depressants and seeking counselling periodically for three years.

Belinda's health was poor; she felt sick most of the time and her glands were often swollen. She found it difficult to relax and 'switch off', her body felt constantly tired. Overall it felt like a lot of energy to keep going. For Belinda, work felt like a battleground - her confidence was low, communication with colleagues felt difficult, and she felt like everyone else at work was 'winning the war'. Yet, work was the main focus of her life. With her self esteem rock-bottom she felt anti-social and she didn't feel she could trust people not to 'kick her while she's down'. One of the first things she said to me was "Everything in my life is a challenge. I've never felt good about anything in my life". Her chiropractor referred her to me, and her journey towards change through NLP began.

"I felt safe working with Karen. I always had a sense there was a purpose to what we were doing."

Belinda's journey

Belinda has generously agreed to share her transformational journey to enable others to see what is possible. Her story illustrates how NLP Coaching enables one to heal old patterns and create new ones. Belinda and I worked together for nine sessions over three months.

Our first few sessions focused on healing emotions, using timeline therapy™ and other therapeutic techniques. Belinda says "I felt safe working with Karen. I always had a sense there was a purpose to what we were doing. It is very gentle work. When we talked about issues or challenges, they weren't magnified while we worked on them. I feel at peace now. That old sadness and emptiness is gone."

Interestingly, when we got around to looking at her health concerns, virtually all her original complaints of tiredness, low energy and feeling ill were gone. We hadn't specifically worked on health issues, and yet, through the emotional healing work she'd done, her health had significantly improved. It was both astonishing and encouraging.

We also worked on transforming limiting beliefs and negative perceptions of herself and others. It was also important to look at Belinda's work/life balance. This included teaching Belinda to juggle! In later sessions we focused in on skills for communicating with family and colleagues.

Transformation

After about six weeks, Belinda came off her anti-depressant medication.

To meet Belinda now, you would see a friendly, professional woman who enjoys her work in the health and fitness industry. She's full of energy and her body knows how to relax. She naturally focuses on the things that make her happy. She feels the freedom of trusting and believing in herself, and living life at her own pace.

Belinda is aware of how her attitudes and behaviour have changed towards people; she's connecting with people in new ways. She notices the nice things people do, and when they are responding positively towards her. She feels free to be herself, no longer worrying about others' perceptions of her. She says "I get on with my colleagues and I feel more social. It's so great that I'm actually happy to socialise!"

"I've left a lot behind and come through the other end stronger emotionally... I feel at peace with everything."

I asked her recently what her most useful lessons have been, and for her it was putting past events into perspective; making sense of them and forming a more realistic view. As Virginia Satir said, we can't change our past, but we can change how we think and feel about it. Belinda said she also found it helpful to use visualisation "to see myself as I'd like to be. And I've learnt to focus on the 'good stuff' automatically now."

"I've left a lot behind and come through the other end stronger emotionally", she says, "I feel at peace with everything."

For anyone experiencing depression, even when it feels hopeless, there is a part of us that wants it to be different. Nurture that part of you, honour it. Trust that change is possible.

By Karen Ross, Fresh Ways Forward



"To different minds, the same world is a hell, and a heaven."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

