



# Abbie's Corner

**November 2001**

Has everyone recovered from the Texas trek to San Antonio? One of the highlights for me was being chased by a galloping herd of longhorns as we bounced around on the back of a hay wagon - 45 minutes riding over rocks - whose idea was that anyway? And the chuck wagon lunch down by the river was cowboy gourmet! The Symposium was great as always with so much valuable information to digest, the warm welcome of old friends and the gift of hope that I think each and every ST'r takes away from one of those weekends. For those of you who have never attended an ST/Dystonia annual conference, make plans now to be with us next year - in Albuquerque, Howard??

In 1986 Dr. Bernie Siegel wrote a book entitled Love Medicine & Miracles. Dr. Siegel was an oncologist and thus focused on patients with cancer, but problems, especially emotional problems shared by those with chronic illness, tend to overlap, regardless of the nature of the illness. Dr. Siegel did a fascinating study that I share with all our clients because it has a bearing on the battle we face with S.T. In this study, done with those either chronically or terminally ill with cancer, it was found that 15-20% of patients would prefer to be sick or die - in other words, they had given up. 60-70% performed to satisfy the doctor, never questioning the diagnosis or treatment; they were seen as "good compliant patients". Then there were the 15-20% who were mavericks; they questioned everything, rolled up their sleeves and did their own research, wanted to be a part of the solution and drove the doctors crazy. What is significant is that in subsequent double blind studies, it was discovered that those in the maverick group had measurably more helper T cells, indicating that their can-do, be-a-fighter attitude actually provided a physical boost to the immune system! Attitude is a very important factor in the recovery process we teach here at the clinic. We simply have to nurture the belief that we can and WILL get better and then do all we can to achieve that goal - and pray for direction. It's the mavericks who usually wind up at S.T.R.C. and are willing to invest the time and discipline needed to go through this daily reprogramming process of lengthening short muscles, teaching the muscles new memory patterning, perhaps altering the diet (please no sugar!), and learning daily habit patterns that support the recovery process rather than the Torticollis. Either the S.T. will dominate us or we will dominate the S.T.

Frustration and impatience are twin monsters we all face in this quick-fix world of ours, but conquering the symptoms of S.T. takes much time and dedication - and, like learning to play the piano, when we begin with baby exercises and practice everyday until our fingers and brain begin to cooperate, we begin this recovery business slowly

but persevere until our muscles begin to cooperate; it's a process. Personally I began with a couple of simple stretches, nightly back rubs, high quality natural vitamins and lots of prayer and tears. It was honestly months into that routine before I saw even a glimmer of change, but I wouldn't give up. I was a maverick and I was mad, and determined to either get well or die trying. The massage work is AS important as the stretching and can be done by a family member at home or by yourself. This method (along with a lot of other valuable information) is described in our free clinic Tip Sheet which I'll be glad to either email or mail to anyone who requests it.  
Be encouraged - there's hope!!

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