

A CHANGE IN ME

Painkillers made me a zombie

WHAT I WAS LIKE Someone I didn't want to be — always aching, tired. Aged 27, I quit my barmaid job. I needed help from social services as well as my mum Jean, 45, so I could cope.

Doctors thought I had chronic pain syndrome as well as chronic fatigue syndrome. But they thought a lot of it was in my head.

I couldn't walk to the end of the road. I was a single mum and my mother had to take my son Joe, five, to the park. My fingers hurt too much to peel vegetables and I couldn't stand by the stove long enough to make a meal.

Then, when I was 29, my GP diagnosed fibromyalgia, a condition that affects muscles,

tendons, ligaments and soft tissue, causing pain and fatigue.

It's brought on by viruses, stress or injuries. I'd had all of those when younger. So he put me on painkillers, which left me like a zombie. I was so low I'd have taken them all at once, if it hadn't been for Mum and Joe.

'I felt a massive surge of energy'

WHAT I DID

Counselling helped me become more positive. Then, when I was 34, I joined the local fibromyalgia support group. Talking to other people helped me cope better.

Two years later, a Bowen technique therapist came to give us a demonstration.

She explained Bowen is a



I couldn't cope

gentle-touch therapy that stimulates the body to self-heal.

She demonstrated on me, and her touch on my back and shoulders was so relaxing.

But straight afterwards, I developed a terrible headache. The therapist was pleased, said it showed the treatment was working. Three days later, I felt a massive surge of energy. I hadn't felt so good in years.

I was on benefits, but saved to pay for more sessions at £30 a time. As I improved, the therapist treated me in exchange for cleaning her home.

Six months later, I got a part-time job in a shop. Now, three years on, I'm back to being a madly busy barmaid. I'm living my life — not simply existing.

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● Visit bowentherapists.com.



Her touch was so relaxing

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**that's
life!**