



Making Endo Happy

My personal Journey with Endometriosis



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Introductions

Hello and welcome to my mini eBook. I wrote this book after having lived with endometriosis for more than 19 years. It has been a long journey and I hope that within these pages you can find solice, support and understanding that you are not alone with the feelings we both might share.

I know that endometriosis can often take us to a very lonely and scary place. A place where we are largely misunderstood, largely misguided and that can bring up many negative views of ourselves and our bodies.

I hope that you can gain insights on how my journey shaped itself over the years and how you too can gain that wonderful place, I have reached in the end.

Much love to you,

Melissa

Preface

There were times when I could describe endometriosis as an unruly child. It had the same characteristics to me, in my mind. It was uncontrollable, ever demanding and somehow no matter what I seemed to do, I couldn't control it or make Endo happy. It became known as: Endo.

It felt like it was bestowed onto me, trying to teach me something and yet, between it's incredible loud bellowing and constant demands on me, I failed to hear it.

It had many characteristics of an unruly child. It demanded my attention at any moment, announcing it wanted me to stay at home and sulk with me. Telling me that it was now time to put all my attention on it. It would also embarrass me, out of the blue with no logical reason.

The funniest thing was, that the more attention I seemed to give to this unwelcomed guest in my body, this thing, "Endo", the more attention it seemed to want from me.

I would give in.... of course. I would take the days off work and explain it to my boss, hoping that yet again they could sympathise with my unruly endo. I would call up friends and explain that once again, I couldn't make it to the party or the get together because, well.... Endo was acting up again.

They all got to know this "Endo". It developed it's own identity and there were no further explanations needed for it. If I mentioned the word, everyone would just kind of know.

Admirably, they never truly understood. Just like perhaps a parent with an unruly child is never truly understood. Most people just assume that the child is lacking discipline. When children scream at the top of their voices in supermarkets, most of us simply look the other way and role our eyes in distain. Well, I am sure there were times when my friends and colleagues and those close to me, would also look the other way and question my truth with Endo.

It was only through my journey, which I am revealing in these pages, that I can truly share my truth. It is far more than just having endometriosis.

Formal Introductions

It attacked me. This grappling pain on my left side. It just sat in my body and continued to gnaw at me. It was an inner gnawing, a pulsating and a deep sense of pain.

I had been on holiday in a beautiful national park, just north of Johannesburg in South-Africa (where I grew up). We were staying at the Kruger National Park with a friend and we were travelling back home. I had experienced some pain that morning but decided it was all going to be okay as I was going home that day.

It was the most painful drive I have ever experienced in my life!

It didn't seem to matter how many times I stopped and went to the toilet, the pain didn't stop. I sat there crippling my abdominal area, the tears trickling down my face and my every being convincing myself, that the trip would end, that somehow I would figure out what was causing this pain. It was a long drive by normal standards of four hours, but when every road and every passing landscape is seen through the eyes of pain, it feels like the longest journey of your life. For me, it felt like it was.

Initially, my doctor only suspected that I was experiencing a bladder infection. I went on antibiotics and though it seemed to dull the ache, the pain never left me from there on in. I had that dull ache on my left side that just seemed to persist and remind me of itself each and every day.

I remember lying in my bathtub one night and staring down at my body and questioning what was wrong with it. I felt so alone in that moment. Like my body had some mystery that I had to uncover. It was hiding something from me. In that moment, the answer came... not in a loud bellowing but in a soft voice that suggested it had something to do with my "womanly bits". It wasn't exactly clear, really? That was the first time, Endo spoke up.

The next few months turned into very lengthy and expensive visits to every doctor I could find. I wanted to know what was going on and for someone to give me some answers. I finally found someone that could appreciate my need to know what this "strange pain on my left side" was all about. He asked me a series of questions about my monthly, my pain levels and what other symptoms I was experiencing in my body and eventually he concluded that it was fairly likely that I had endometriosis.

I couldn't even pronounce the word, never mind trying to understand what it was!

He suggested that the only way for me to truly know if it was endometriosis was for me to have an operation, called a Laparoscopy.

My first thinking was YES! I would love an operation. Get it taken out, this strange Endo.... me.... teosis or whatever it is called! I just want it out! Get it out of me and it can take that nasty pain along with it.

That was the first operation of 7.

The truth was, I never realised that I would need another one. I assumed that one would do the trick. That they would cut out whatever this Endo thingy was and that would be the end of it.

The operation was hard. I had never been for one before and my body took a massive beating. I felt so drugged up that I couldn't walk out of the hospital. I literally had to be wheeled out in a wheelchair. Luckily, I had the support of a good friend and family to be there for me.

My body reacted badly to the antibiotics and landed up spending the next 3 days with excruciating pain on the toilet. The cramps compounded together with the tender swelling of the operation. Everything was so incredibly sore and so incredibly tender.

I didn't want to move. I didn't want to get up. I felt depressed. I felt exhausted.

DEPLETED.
BEATEN DOWN.
LOST.

After two weeks the cloud started to lift. My body started to recover and I started to feel better. The pain seemed to have gone and I felt like it was all worth it. I could carry on with my life now!

The doctors visit revealed something different...

As I sat there, staring at my doctor as he explained to me the severity of my endometriosis, I was left numb. Like the whole thing wasn't real. Like I was imagining this, like it was just some horrible nightmare. In that moment, it felt like I had shrunk, down to a tiny being, with no voice, no power and just this big fat life sentence...

The words rung deep within me:
"endometriosis cannot be cured"
"You have Stage 4 endometriosis".
"You may never have children"

I was 19 years old. My life suddenly became serious. It became complex. It became more than me. It was like a big fat slap of reality.

I was formally introduced to Endo.

I was advised by the doctors that we needed to take steps to control it, to keep it in check or it would spread to the rest of my organs. The predominance of my endometriosis had been found in my left ovary but also within the fallopian tubes, which meant that possibility of pregnancy was substantially reduced.

I was filled with fear. Filled with an ever questioning concern about the state of my body. I had such a deep desire to look inside, see what was going on and somehow get it all back to normal. Wasn't there some way I could clean it all out?

Control

The way that endometriosis was described to me was like a dark, sticky tar, that spread slowly and easily within my body. It would find it's way into areas where it didn't belong. It would infest and take over. It was sticky and somehow dirty in my mind.

I remember spending a day at a park and sitting on the bench staring at the ducks on the pond. I remember looking at the water, with it's crispness and cleanness and wishing that somehow I could use the water to cleanse my insides. That I could just get out a scrubbing brush and just get in there and clean it all out. Then I could use a big pressure hose and just rinse really well. That would surely get rid of that sticky mess inside my body?

I felt somehow betrayed by my body in that moment. I resented it for having endometriosis. I resented my limited choices. I resented having to go through operation after operation.

So, I did what most of us would do, I decided I needed to take control of my endometriosis. I would explore every option, visit every specialist and provide the best medical care that I could to help it get better. I wanted to control this endometriosis. I wasn't going to let it rule my life and perhaps it just needed some good discipline!

And so, began the experiments to control this endometriosis. To keep it in check and to reduce it's spreading.

I started with Danazol. It was a hormone treatment that was supposed to reduce the spreading and though it came with a long list of side-effects, my doctor advised that we needed to do something or the endometriosis would just take over and impact more of my insides. The combination of fear and that horrible vision of sticky tar within my lower abdominal area made me agree. I also simply didn't feel like there was any other choice. I had to do something!

I tried it for a year. My hair started falling out. I experienced headaches, migraines and gained weight. I felt terrible most of the time and seemed to be spotting continuously for the length of taking the Danazol. I initially thought that perhaps I wasn't taking enough or perhaps my body had failed me - yet again!

The doctor assured me that it would take time and that it would be the best option.

I trusted in him. I wanted to. I needed to. I needed to find some level of control of this thing and perhaps I just needed to persist. To give it more time to be effective.

It never was.

After a year of trying Danazol and experiencing all the side-effects, I had to go for my second operation.

The endometriosis had spread again and the situation was not looking good.

It was time to visit a different doctor.

I discovered a specialist who was very familiar with endometriosis. He had helped 100's of women and indicated great success with pregnancy. I felt more hopeful and confident that this doctor could help me to control my endometriosis.

And so we stood together, both ready and strong to fight this endometriosis that was lurking in my body. We had our boxing gloves on and we were hitting it from both ends.

In a 10 year period I tried a wide selection of hormone treatments, things that would stop my pituitary gland and ultimately another 5 operations.

Our ammo had run out. We had fought so hard, we were both exhausted with what else we could do. This Endo was relentless and wasn't giving in.

The only suggestion my doctor could give me was to look at the potential psychology behind my endometriosis. That perhaps there was some stress element within myself that made it so relentless.

I felt like a mother might feel when she picks up her child from the principles office again. Endo was still winning and nothing I had tried seemed to make it be anymore controllable or beatable.

TIRED.
ENDLESS.
SURRENDER.

Blaming & Taming

I was the youngest one in the group. Surrounded by women who were in their late 30's had been trying to fall pregnant for years and still not having any real answers. I just wasn't sure if this was the right place for me...

My doctor had advised me that there had been many studies that indicated that there was a certain type of stress which seemed to trigger or make endometriosis worse. It was labelled: "Timeous Perfectionism". The idea behind it is that because we want things perfectly and quickly, it builds a type of stress in the body, which they said would make endometriosis worse. I joined this Psychology Group to try and alleviate it within myself.

It was an interesting study and when we went through a series of questions and tests, it appeared that they were right. I was a Timeous Perfectionist. I would stress over doing everything perfectly but also wanted everything to be done super quickly.

So, I spent the next six weeks taking part in the study and working on releasing my timeous perfectionistic stress. I would have to notice it and then make a point of changing it. So, instead of getting all stressed out at a traffic light because of "idiot" drivers, I would turn my attention onto something else. I would make a concerted effort to choose to be on time or to be perfect but that I couldn't possibly be both. It made sense to me on some superficial level but there was a deeper more prominent emotion that drove that desire to be perfect, to be timeous which never seemed to be touched on within the course - more on that later...

After the course, I definitely felt some sense of truth to having Timeous Perfectionism and decided that perhaps I should explore more aspects within myself that might be making my endometriosis worse.

The beginning of the blaming and taming of endometriosis.

I spent the next few years exploring my true inner self. I wanted to delve in and discover if on some level perhaps it was all my doing. That perhaps by my thoughts, my anger and my way of being, I had created endometriosis.

By this stage of my journey, I had settled with a deep sense of Endo always being within my life. Having met women 10 years older than me in the psychology group who were still struggling and seemed to be so much worse,

I just didn't see my future being any better. I came into a terrible space with Endo. It was a space of self loathing. I hated my body for having Endo. I hated myself for whatever I had done to create it.

It had to be my fault after all.

LOST LOVE.
INNER PAIN.
DEEP REGRET.

I explored various teachings over those years. Some helped me to recognise possible ties with endometriosis triggers and my past. I went through many experiences of blame. Many moments of resentment. I would blame my upbringing, my strict mother, my lack of love and support. Overall, I would blame myself. I felt a deep inner pain. It wasn't just the endo pain. It was an emptiness, a deep desire for love and though I kept seeking it from outside sources, nothing seemed to quite fill it up. It was as if someone had dug out my insides and left behind a deep black mound of endo in it's place.

There was one massive realisation that happened through those years, which has made me grateful for that part of my journey. I went through a weekend course where we were encouraged to cry out our inner pains. We were to delve into the emotion, the pain of it and dig into it and allow the feeling out of our bodies. It was an incredibly intense course and I spent two solid days just crying from the pit of my being. Towards of the second day, a vision appeared to me about a past event that happened when I was 6 years old. It was related to my young brother who passed away, having only been a few months old. As a young girl, I had taken the blame for that event happening to my mother. I felt that as her daughter I had let her down and so began my endless need for her approval.

I spent most of my adult life trying to please her - which is where I think the big driver for Timeous Perfectionism came from. I never felt good enough or worthy enough of her love or attention. It wasn't truth. It was my perception, formed in those young years of my life.

I did experience incredible release from that weekend and it alleviated much of my pain with endometriosis. It did however put me on a new journey of simply seeking out other things that needed "fixing" within my body and my mind. I became obsessed with looking at what could be "wrong" with me. Every obstacle, every moment of pain was just a reminder that there was some deep emotion, held in my body that needed fixing. I became addicted to finding them and releasing them.

I remember one day, looking in the mirror and just crying. Crying with deep, painful tears for just being so unhappy with myself and my body. I felt like everything was my fault. That I had made this happen to my body. That it was my doing. I had blamed myself for it all. Endo was my fault.

I think it was in that moment that Endo kinda stopped bellowing quite so loudly. It became more sedate and quiet. It didn't feel the need to be heard quite as much. I had tamed it. Not because I had fought hard enough or I had done enough to help it but because perhaps it had received the power it so desperately wanted. I was now it's master. The combination of physical pain and the emotional burdens of self loathing was enough for it to win.

Endo had won. I stopped fighting.

I spent the next few years in and out of the hospital enduring those operations and simply dealing with the consequences of endometriosis. When I had a sore day, I would call in sick. When the side-effects on a pill or treatment got too strong, I would change to something else. I kept at it but Endo was the driver. It decided when and how things would happen. It was the ruler of my life.

I chose easy jobs that didn't stress me out. I chose friends that would understand and I chose men in my life that were supportive and understood that well, certain sex positions were just not possible! Every decision was made with endometriosis in mind. I just found it easier to give into it in those years.

Learning to Love

It was the day after my last operation. I looked out the window and began to cry. It was all just too hard. I couldn't deal with another operation ever again. The pain, the exhaustion and the pure emptiness in my soul was just too much to bear. I had to find a different way.

A little voice inside me just started to soothe me. It was as if all the fighting, all the blaming and the endless need for control was enough. It was that inner, soft part of myself, perhaps my soul that just needed me to let it all go. I had to just learn to love.

Love it all. My body, my heart and my soul. I couldn't see any other options. I was all out of everything else. None of the fighting and pushing seemed to work for me. None of the searching and fixing seemed to work for me. Nothing seemed to control it, so I surrendered and I just started to give it a different medicine..... love.

I started to explore a new way of looking at my body. I started to open my mind to the possibility that I could actually heal and be healthy.

IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF MY
LOVE FOR MYSELF AND MY ENDO.

I began to understand the importance of the juice, the fuel that I gave my body. I began to realise that everything I put into, onto and within my body mattered. It all influenced how I felt. It influenced my well-being.

It was giving true love to my body. True love in the form of absolute care. Care in what I ate, care in how I treated myself and care in listening to my personal body's needs. I started to ask it what it wanted to be fed and what foods could truly nourish it and lift it up. I no longer ate just to feel full but made a conscious effort to feed my body the foods that could provide it with an undeniable energy and fuel. It would finally be replenished of all that it had lost over the years. I would fill it up with all the goodness of nature.

I started to genuinely care for my body. I would give it scrubs and special massages. I would take it out on special treats and spend hours just making it look as beautiful as it could.

I stopped with the incessant need to fix my inner thinking. I just accepted all that was and could be and allowed myself to let it all go. To stop resenting, wishing and hoping that somehow things could be different. I started to truly love where I was and for all that I was.

It was when I started to really recognise just how amazing the body truly is. It started to change. The aches and pains started to diminish. The little things I had put up with for years, started to disappear. I started to feel my essence. My true self. I felt alive for the first time in years. Every cell in my body was praising me, thanking me for finally taking real care and truly providing.

“Where there is love, there is
compassion and in that, there is an
infinite possibility”

- Melissa Turner

I remember one of my first visits to a Chinese Doctor and him stating to me that I need to be still, not within my body or on a physical sense but on a mental level. I needed to be still in this moment and learn to listen to my body.

My body needed to be loved. My inner self needed to be loved and ultimately the endometriosis needed to be loved too.

LOVE.
ADMIRATION.
HOPE.

I changed my diet, my lifestyle and everything about how I treated myself and my body. I started to understand endometriosis. Not as some unruly child or some nasty, black sticky tar but rather as an imbalance that my body was expressing to me.

I became fascinated with the body, it's inner workings. It's amazing energy and ability to heal. I began to understand that endometriosis was not some horrible curse that was simply placed upon me or even something I had done onto myself but rather something of an expression of my body.

It has been an incredible adventure in understanding and truly getting to know Endo. It just needed me to take care of it and listen to it. I can now appreciate it's wanting, what it was really lacking and more important what I needed to give it to make it stop bellowing and drawing from me.

Suddenly, there were lessons in this journey. Suddenly, the endometriosis had provided me with amazing teachings of a journey which many would never experience.

I had found a place where I could truly accept myself.

The Key Lifeforce

I had never understood the importance of my food choices.

It was only when I discovered the lifeforce that is contained in food, that I started to value my choices around it.

Each meal, could either provide for my body, provide it essence, nourishment and every element it needed to function OR it would be left starving, craving and aching (literally) for something else.

It was only through my desire to truly serve my body and give for it, that the voice inside myself was able to answer the true question of what it needed.

It called out to me to study and try different foods and it would quickly let me know when it wasn't content with my choice. It became an adventure, an exploration and a wonderful gift.

My body responded with ultimate energy and essence. The same essence which I was feeding myself.

It was alive, it was energised and it was incredibly rich in a deep sense of connection with nature and the inner workings of it's being.

I could literally stand in amazement as each pain, each ache and each imbalance within my body transcended.

It was as if I had poured an elixer of life over my body. I had found the juice, the potion, the miracle that it truly craved..... rich, dense, nutritious and vibrant food. Glorious food. Foods that healed, foods that cleansed and foods that boosted my immunity, my defences.

Suddenly, each meal was about finding the best source of nourishment. It was about laying out a spread for my human cells and organs to enjoy. They could lap it up, with all it's goodness!

THE LIFE FORCE OF FOOD BEGAN
MY TRANSFORMATION.

The Climb

I had reached a new level. As if in a playstation game. I had my ammo. I had super power energy and my reserves were totally full. I was on super drive! I could take my healing to a whole new level.

Without this power, without this energy, I would never have been able to confront any new challenges within my healing journey. Things that I had perhaps never wanted to look at, things that were holding me back. I was always too tired or too sore.

With this new energy, it was as if I had a new lens on my life and my body. I could suddenly do things. I could recover from things but most importantly, I could try things. Cleanses, emotional break-throughs, exercise and incredible herbs and supplements all became part of my big adventure. My new lens on healing.

MY NEW LENS, SHIFTED MY
VIEWPOINT. I COULD SEE AND
EXPLORE THIS JOURNEY AS A
LIFE ADVENTURE.

Standing beside it

I recognise Endo for what it is now. I no longer identify with it as something that was caused by me or that relates to some event or expression of my past. I no longer resent it or feel any anger towards it.

What the endo has taught me is incredible compassion and love. Not just for others but mostly for myself.

I can now stand beside it, experience it and let it sit within me and view upon it as a completely separate entity. It no longer dominates but it is simply a standing of something that exists.

It is when we go into that still place within ourselves and can recognise those separate experiences we may have held, that no longer cause us pain. This is how Endo feels to me now. It is like something that has happened, that is there but it no longer brings up anger, fear and worry.

I can now stand in complete reflection of it. Stand next to it, like I am looking at it but without judgement or pain or anger. I can simply know that it is there and recognise that it needs love.

I know it needs a special kind of love, which I give it with the right food, the right self talk and true self care. It needs a little more because it is so super special.

However, my heart is open and is so happy to give. Because ultimately I am giving to more than just endometriosis. I am giving to myself and others in the process.

The End



Melissa is the founder of EndoEmpowered, a community space for women who wish to find out about treating endometriosis with a holistic approach. She writes weekly about her personal experience with endometriosis. Her Facebook support group also offers Women a sanctuary and a private space to share and discover natural ways of treating endometriosis. She shares her knowledge on how to successfully manage endometriosis using a holistic approach in her online program, the [Endo Wellness Technique](#). She is an inspiration and a beacon of hope for so many women with endometriosis. We thank her for sharing her personal story and to give from the deepest part of who she has now become.