

## **6. I know that 10 am Tuesday I'll have a smile**

I've been under the doctor for depression for a long time and it seemed to be getting worse. So the surgery put me in touch with a lady from Mind I think and she suggested *Talking Space Plus*. I joined a group and had to miss the next two weeks and had one more session and then the lockdown but in that time I'd actually gone to Archway, Wednesday Welcome. I only made it once. Then I got a phone call and I didn't realise that it would keep going, every Tuesday I've been spoken to. It's lifeline, it really is.

It's someone to talk to that isn't family. I find it sometimes easier to talk to a stranger because they can't see what you are thinking or what you are doing. But if I've had a really bad week or even a bad Monday, I know that 10 am Tuesday I'll have a smile. I get all emotional thinking about it. Rachel rings and she's amazing. She'll talk about anything, whether it's to do with my depression, or lockdown or even dog walking. We talk about everything. She told me she was ancient, but she's got a wicked sense of humour and it sort of matches mine. So I think that's why we get on but yeah, I'm always smiling at the end of the phone call as well as the beginning and all the way through.

I have two Jack Russells called Jack and Russell. Original I know. I have a mobility scooter so taking them out on that...yeah, it takes a bit of work and they are so strong. We are very well known but unfortunately it's because my two, they misbehave. But I was walking when I got them and I got them because I thought it'll help me get out. Because I got them and I was walking, I overdid it and I ended up on a mobility scooter.

I've got a lot of pain, basically from my hair roots down to my toes. I've had so many hospital appointments at different hospitals and they say everything's fine. Well, it isn't fine because I've got all this pain and I want to know why. I know I need to try and get a doctor's appointment but I don't want to because I don't want to be told everything's okay and get signed off again which has happened I don't know how many times. I wonder whether they believe me or not. My pain is genuine. I weaned myself off all the addictive painkillers because the pain clinic wouldn't see me until I had. I had an appointment and I walked, well I limped out of there crying because, 'there's nothing wrong' and there is something wrong. I've got a lot of pain every day and I've also got a heart condition. I have to laugh otherwise I'd go under and I'm feeling it at the moment. I'm trying not to get into that dark place. The Tuesday phone call definitely rescues me a bit from that dark place.

I don't have regular contact with family members, they are too far away. I speak to my mum every day but physical, no I haven't seen my mum for sixteen months. It works both ways with my mum. She's actually said, 'you know you are helping me through it,' while talking to her helps me. She's got COPD and mobility problems so she's been housebound for eighteen months now. We're in similar situations. It's hard. I mean she's in her eighties now. Will I ever get to see her again? I don't know. It's horrible.

Nearby, I've got my friends Sue and Mark. They're worse off than I am. I met Sue at a pain management course seven or eight years ago. You know, best friends. With lockdown, I haven't been able to see them. That's one thing that gets me a lot. I actually, I'm talking to my neighbours now. We didn't speak for years and I do see them regularly, so I'm sort of in

their bubble. So at least I do have someone I can talk to or see, but I want it to be Sue and Mark. They know that I get my phone calls and they like the idea that I do have someone to talk to. Same with my mum.

Life is tough. That's where the humour comes in. I really want to meet Rachel, I'd love to. Wednesday Welcome, we need it back.