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## OUT OF THE DARKNESS

For me, 2020 began to fall apart right from the start. My husband and I drove to Florida in January, looking forward to a few weeks in the sunshine. Yes, my back had been bothering me some when we left, but nothing a little rest wouldn't fix. Or so I thought.

Within a few days of our arrival in Florida, I couldn't get myself up off the bed. My husband drove our van and I rode in a private ambulance 26 hours straight to MidMichigan ER where I immediately got an MRI that showed I had a sacral fracture and multiple microfractures.

By the time I was discharged on a walker we were into February. Little did I know that the fun had just begun. My husband needed a pacemaker, but those are very routine and just a half-day procedure, nothing to it. Right? But this is 2020, so unbeknownst to surgeon or patient, a ventricle was punctured during the surgery. A week later, intense pain & nausea meant a late night 911 call and 8 days in the hospital for my husband, including a second surgery to repair the damage and reposition the pacemaker leads.

All this even before a global pandemic shut down in-person schools, churches, and businesses. And before the rains came. And the waters rose. And the dams broke.

I took a deep dive into that darkness about the point my husband was hospitalized. I couldn't visit him because of Covid, but with limited mobility, I was just focused on getting myself through the days. And to top off my anxiety, our cat was sick and I couldn't deal with one more thing. I was thinking that if there wasn't a simple fix, I would have the cat put down because I couldn't deal with a sick cat right then.

I didn't call for therapy at that time, but I did call my doctor and got put on an antidepressant for the first time in my life. It took a few more weeks until the dam broke for everything to break inside me, and then I did get an appointment with a therapist at Family & Children's Services.

I think it is human nature to want to make comparisons and we do it over difficulties also. We think, "Well, yeah, what I'm going through is tough, but not nearly as tough as what that person is dealing with."

The difficulties of life are not a competition. What you are dealing with, is what YOU are dealing with. How it impacts you and how you respond at that particular moment in time is unique to you. No better, no worse than your neighbor. Just different. Your stuff is your stuff.

If you are grieving or struggling with anxiety, you need time to sit with that, process that, find strength to name your pain. As Stephen Hawking said, "If you feel you are in a black hole, don't give up – there's a way out."