

How did this happen?

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Ok, so I guess I'll start with a little background.

I'm a 26 year old female, I have agoraphobia with panic disorder and severe depression. I had a fairly normal childhood (but not without traumatizing events)...I assume most people have those. Came from a very functional loving yet sometimes stressful family. Always had hard times forming lasting relationships.

So I guess this all started when I was around 22. The previous 2 years had been very life changing for me. I went from being a 20 year old that weighed 280 pounds and was 5'10" with severe depression, self mutilation problems and a very very low self esteem to being a 22 year old that weighed 130 pounds and many many admiring fans of it. I started to feel really good about myself and was living life to it's fullest. Going out constantly, meeting all the people that never would have given me the time of day before. I was practically beaming with self confidence because I finally had the life I had always dreamed of. I was normal and people liked me.

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I ended up meeting a guy who I thought was amazing (and it was mainly because he would have never talked to the "old me"). As time went on in our relationship I found that the only reasons he liked me were because of the way I looked and because I was so grateful to be accepted by him...I let him get away with almost everything. Eventually these things started to catch up with me, I guess I was getting used to the new skin. And I started to react like the "old me". I never realized how badly I was treated by him until I took a step back, and the moment I stood back, he was out of my life. The fact that I let someone treat me so horribly shook my world.

We stopped seeing each other all together and then I found out I was pregnant. So we started communicating again and he sucked me back into his world. A few months later things were very strained with me and him. And I was trying to make the best of the situation. He eventually told me that he was seeing someone else and that he thought we should stop talking again.

I ended up having the baby and being completely cut out of his life. His new girlfriend didn't want the baggage that came with an ex girlfriend of his and a baby of his. A few months after my son was born I was at the mall shopping like any other normal day. I walked into one of my favorite stores and it was like the world was coming down on top of me. I had

never felt anything like this in my entire life. I got clammy feeling, tunnel vision, racing heart, felt like I was going to puke everywhere. So I turned around and started to exit the store. The minute I stepped outside I dropped. Passed out in the middle of a busy mall with no one with me. People of course came to see if I was alright and if I needed any help. I ended up calling my mother who I lived with. She talked to me to calm me down and said that it was maybe because I hadn't been eating right and I had just had a baby..I just needed to take it easy. So I got up and tried to leave the mall. As soon as I got to my car it happened again. She was still on the phone and heard the whole thing. So she came to the mall to get me.

From that point on my life spiraled downwards. Panics about everything... leaving the house, not being around someone at all times, driving, even eating certain foods made me panic. I became housebound for 2 years. My parents adopted my son because I became an unfit mother and didn't want him taken away from me. (His father found out about all of these things)

This lasted for years. Until my mother talked me into seeing a doctor. Thinking that something was physically wrong with me. They ended up referring me to a counselor. It was the best decision I have ever made. To me, she is one of the most amazing people I've ever met. I sometimes feel like I owe my life to her. Because with out her..I doubt I would have a functioning one at all. She did put me on medication, that helped greatly. But she always told me medication alone wouldn't help my problems. She worked through my childhood issues of abandonment and bullying. How I was always afraid of dissapointing everyone I knew. And after learning reasons why this might have happened to me we began to teach me coping skills.

I went almost 3 years with out being able to have a job, a social life, a relationship. And because of learning how to cope and manage my feelings and anxieties. I now have a full time job (that I love), a fiance (that I adore) and a life that is getting better everyday.

In the end I learned that one of the most simple ways to recover or even function with agoraphobia is to learn exactly what it is and to stop thinking your life is over and that you'll never be the person you once were. It's all about becoming the new person you are. Yes you have a disease that makes it harder for you..but it's not the end of you, it's the beginning of a brand new you. You may be a person that is more anxious and a little more cautious, but you can still live an amazing life. Having wonderful people who understand and care about what's happening to you is a wonderful start. You have to learn to trust your own instincts and not always run. Fight or flight they say....flying is easy...but fighting is definately worth it in the end of the day.