

Look for Support and Others in the Same Situation

When feeling alone find others in a similar situation to share your experience with, to listen to, to be with, to share comfort with in order to nurture hope, to grow, learn to accept and eventually reinvent oneself.

Someone to Lean On



Not feeling like part of a pack
Hope dwindles feeling desperate and alone

Not being with another
Longing for soft touch, gentle yet strong

Memories of how it use to be
Haunt in dark corners of my mind

I must move out of this place of forlorn
Into a new pack of my very own kind

I reach deep within new spaces
Make a quest and ask around

Seems scary to reach out
Stepping into the uncharted but newly found

Garnering courage and resilience
I recognize the gift of time
With intent and offering others support
A new pack will begin to circle me around

The process of learning to accept our situation as it is right now can be a journey through the woods of the unknown. Sometimes dark and sometimes bright but often filled with shadow and light. However, you don't need to face the forest feeling alone. There are others out there trying to find the path, look for the light and attempt to get to another place. Some have found a way and are willing to share how they did their journey. Some are feeling lost and scared. But whatever the feelings:

- we can learn from one another
- we can provide support for another
- we can share our experiences together

Then, when we need support or help, we will have someone to lean on because we have offered that support to others.

These are the people that I can call upon to offer my support to: _____

Starting in 2006, I spent 3 years sequestered in my house recovering from a traumatic brain injury until I was well enough to go to outpatient rehab for brain injury. During that time I didn't know of another person with a TBI. There

were no online forums for brain injury and the only information found was a medical essay filled with unknown words. Face to face computer visits were just being invented and were difficult at best to set up. My symptoms were scary and overwhelming and my husband and I couldn't get answers to our questions. Has anyone else ever experienced this? What strategies could I use to stop crashing on the couch for days? How can I find others with the same situation? This is what we did:

- my husband asked everyone he met and family members where we could find help
- we asked my doctors and therapists
- we searched the internet and looked into newspapers

Very little opportunities to obtain knowledge or meet another person came our way. And then my mother heard of a person in her town, several states away, of someone with post concussive syndrome. We called each other and learned that we had similar experiences and symptoms. I learned that I am not alone and I had someone to lean on. Later on, we heard of a brain injury rehab hospital in the city about an hour away. My husband and I did everything we could to learn about this place and what it took to go there. We did not sit around and wait. We learned, talked with others and advocated for ourselves and our situation. It was there, amongst others with similar situations that a group of people to lean on and provide support to developed over time.

Finding someone to lean on, a pack of people with similar experiences required exploration, courage, resilience, intent, self-awareness and a certain amount of acceptance of this is the situation for right now. And, this took time.

These are some of the ways that I could look for people in a similar situation:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Instead of waiting until I NEED someone to lean on, I can do the following to provide support for others while building my "pack":

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your journey of wandering in the woods has a beginning yet has no known end. You can find others in a similar situation or create a new group to wander together. Investigate, reach out, participate and believe that you can be part of a community of persons with similar situations. Offer to be a person for someone else to lean on and you will find that you too, have someone to lean on in your time of need.

Journal Prompt: I am wandering through the forest and come across a clearing. This is where I see those who I can learn from and those I can lean on for support. This is who they are and what they say to me:

Affirmation: I have the courage and resilience to find others in community that I can be in support with in my newly reinvented life.