

With these changes may come a loss of meaning and purpose to life. We learn in CPA to find new ways to value our lives. We learn that no matter how much pain we have or how debilitating our illness may be, we can contribute to our community. It isn't the size of the act that is important; it is the attitude of knowing we have something to give.

One Day At A Time I will **acknowledge feelings of fear and anxiety as they rise up. When they appear I will remember to put my trust in a Power greater than myself. I will have hope in knowing that this, too, shall pass and I will have faith that I can thrive through anything when I do it one moment at a time.**

There are times when we feel overwhelmed by our fears. We falsely believe we will be “stuck” like this for the rest of our lives. However, all things are constantly changing, and this too will pass. We remember our strength, our courage and all the challenges in the past that we dealt with successfully. We remember that we are never alone and that our Higher Power wants the best for us always. We know that we can do what is necessary when we break it down into small steps. We can get through the day when we take it one moment at a time, and not get lost in future worries.

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One Day At A Time Explained

In CPA we learn to live in the solution and not in the problem. These *One Day at a Time* suggestions can guide us toward serenity. We can't take them all on at once.

It helps to take one, study it, and apply it to our lives until we are familiar with it. Over time we will see how changing attitudes and actions can open the door to newfound happiness and a celebration of life.



“... a fellowship for those with chronic pain and chronic illness.”

One Day At A Time I will **make an effort to participate in the world. I will reach out and connect with another person. I can pick up the phone and call a friend, greet someone on the street, or I can smile at the clerk in the store.**

When we live with chronic pain or chronic illness isolation may become a way of life. It's natural to withdraw when we're not feeling well. We may feel discouraged because we can't socialize the way we once did. Preparing to go out takes much longer than it did in the past. In CPA we learn to let go of the way things were, and discover new ways of relating to our families, our friends and to the world. We take baby steps as we begin to engage with others and break free from our self-imposed isolation.

One Day At A Time I will **put my focus on promoting the well-being of someone besides myself. I will take the attention off of me and my issues and place it on the needs of another being.**

When we first become ill or injured it serves us well to tune into our bodies and pay attention to small changes. As we become familiar with our new condition there is much we need to learn, but once it becomes chronic, it no longer serves us to be so focused on ourselves. In CPA we learn that self-pity contributes to our suffering and in our self-absorption we can lose sight of others. When we help someone else, or focus on another person's needs, our obsession with our own pain or illness

starts to diminish. When we give to others our sense of self-worth increases and our bond with the people around us grows stronger.

One Day At A Time I will **pace myself and trust my body to guide me. I will not push when my body tells me it's time to stop. I will do half of what I think I can accomplish.**

Many of us find that when we have a good day, we try to do everything we could not do on the days we were limited by our pain or illness. On a bad day we stoically push through the pain and discomfort. We have an agenda for the day and we want to check every item off the list. We resent it when our bodies need to stop and take a break. In CPA we learn Easy Does It, and we practice this by making new choices for ourselves. We see our list of “to-do's” as suggestions, not as demands. We trust that everything will get accomplished—or not—and let go of the timeline we have imposed on ourselves. We listen to our bodies, rather than argue with them or ignore them. We accept the parameters of the day, knowing that they are for this day, this hour, only. We treat ourselves with kindness and set realistic goals. This may mean doing only some of what we set out to do but we accept that it is enough.

One Day At A Time I will **eat well and exercise in moderation. I will take an interest in my appearance and tend to my personal hygiene. I may dress comfortably but I will try to look my very best.**

When we live with chronic pain or chronic illness we may have periods of fatigue and depression. We stop caring about our appearance and limit activity to what is absolutely necessary. We stop caring about our appearance and stop moving unless we must. Our weight may change and our clothes may no longer fit. In the past we may have jogged five miles a day and now we can barely walk to the kitchen. Our focus has narrowed onto our pain and illness and we may feel so defeated that we stop caring about our overall health. In CPA we learn to “act as if” until we begin to care again. We find new styles that work, even when our budgets are limited. We stop making excuses and find one small way to enhance our appearance. When we strengthen our bodies and look good on the outside we begin to feel better inside as well.

One Day At A Time **I will ask for help when I need it. I will accept assistance graciously and be thankful. I will appreciate the people in my life who support me.**

Sometimes we are uncomfortable asking for help from others. We might resent having to turn to friends and family to help us with activities we used to do with ease on our own. We may receive help grudgingly, and hide the shame or guilt we feel for needing assistance. We may have unrealistic expectations of those who are close to us and criticize them for doing things the “wrong” way. In our frustration with our situation we may lash out at the very people who are helping us. In CPA we are reminded

it’s a gift for those who care about us to be able to lend a hand. We can choose to let go of perfection, and be kind, gracious and respectful toward those who offer their support.

One Day At A Time **I will live each day to the best of my ability and take responsibility for my own happiness. I will notice the good in life and not dwell on the negative. I will count my blessings and enjoy all that I’ve been given.**

After so much change, upheaval and loss we can find ourselves seeing the glass as half empty. We stop seeing the good in our lives and begin to expect the worst. We lose hope for a better tomorrow and lose sight of the simple blessings that once filled our lives. We need an attitude adjustment. One way of doing this is to create a gratitude list. When we make a list of all that is good in our lives we often discover a much longer list than we expected. When we look around us we find many wonderful gifts and as we shift our attention to the positive, our spirits are lightened and we gain new hope for the future.

One Day At A Time **I will remember that I am more than my pain or my illness. I will believe that I am perfect exactly as I am. I will accept whatever comes my way with an attitude of gratitude.**

We can get lost in our pain and illness and lose sight of the big picture. We find peace when we can grieve what is gone, and choose to embrace what we have today. The world is

in constant change, including our bodies. Our bodies today are different, not wrong. When we choose to love ourselves just as we are, we begin to find serenity and happiness. Rather than fighting our bodies, we choose to accept them with love. This allows us to recognize that we, and our Higher Power, are much larger than the pain and illness.

One Day At A Time **I will make an extra effort to be patient and gentle with myself and others when I am feeling irritable and frustrated. No blame, no shame. Just because I am in pain doesn’t mean I have to be a pain.**

When we feel poorly we can have a tendency to be short-tempered and impatient. It takes time to learn how to recognize this and not act on our feelings. No one is to blame for our condition, including ourselves. We no longer feel shame, thinking we don’t deserve to exist. When we are in pain and have little energy, we can make a choice to be pleasant to those around us or to take some quiet time alone. We don’t have to create wreckage around us, or treat others rudely. This may require us to “act as if” for a while, but in time we learn how to ask for what we need without demanding. As a result, we learn to be compassionate with ourselves and others.

One Day At A Time **I will create some quiet moments for myself. I can use them for inner reflection, reviewing my day, or strengthening my spiritual connections. Taking this time each day is a rich and rewarding gift to myself.**

Our daily lives are often filled with lists of things to do. We find that it brings clarity as well as connection with our Higher Power when we take time each day to be quiet, to stop doing, and to just be for a time. We can use this time to meditate, to pray, to enjoy nature, to create a painting, or to write in a journal. This is time to set aside just for us, to step back from our busy lives and listen.

One Day At A Time **I will enjoy something that is fun. I will engage my mind in creative activities. I will try something different and be open to new possibilities.**

We get very serious when we live with chronic pain and illness. Our days may be occupied with treatments, medications and doctor visits. Life becomes challenging and we forget to have fun. We lose touch with the activities that once gave us pleasure. It may mean doing things differently but we have learned the value of a “can do” attitude. When one door is closed, another is opened, but we need to be willing to get out of the hallway and open that door. We need to open our minds to new possibilities and let our Higher Power do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

One Day At A Time **I accept the conditions of my life as they are this day. Within any condition I can contribute to myself, my family, and my community. I am a valuable member of society.**

Chronic pain and chronic illness may result in giving up our jobs, volunteer activities and adopting unfamiliar roles in our families.