

# Lisa Gigliotti



When Lisa was first diagnosed with myasthenia gravis (MG) more than 25 years ago, she had significant symptoms of muscle weakness. She experienced difficulty chewing and swallowing, and because her double vision could occur at any time, she felt unsafe driving a car. She also struggled to take deep breaths, and was unable to continue singing in the various musical groups that brought her great pleasure. It was hard for her to travel with family and friends because of her leg muscle weakness.

Eventually, Lisa partnered with a neurologist and they worked together to try to find a balance of medical and nonmedical treatments and techniques to help her mitigate her MG symptoms. After undergoing several different treatments—including a thymectomy—Lisa’s symptoms finally became manageable.

“I consider this one of my greatest triumphs,” said Lisa. “I believe it was a combination of medical treatments, but also self-management of my disease. I recognized there were many aspects of my disease that I could control: my diet, getting enough sleep, making sure my body didn’t get overheated, and keeping any feeling of stress in check, instead focusing on gratitude and positively moving forward in my life.”

What followed for Lisa was a graduation from law school, and a successful, exciting, adventurous career in law. She has since regained her ability to sing, and, by planning and paying close attention to factors that might exacerbate muscle weakness symptoms, she is able to travel and enjoy many activities with her family and friends.

“If I encounter an obstacle because of MG, I believe there is always a way to work around it, or a way to reframe the situation to be positive. I choose to focus on the fact that there is always an ability to take charge of some aspect of myasthenia gravis and its impact on my life,” Lisa said. “For example, instead of focusing on the fact that I don’t have any or enough control to lift my arm, I instead choose to focus on the fact that I am lucky to have food to eat, a home to live in, and to be alive that day. The one thing I want people to know about

MG is that it is possible to live a fulfilling, purpose-filled, and joy-filled life with MG.”

To learn more about how you can help create a world without MG, visit <http://www.myasthenia.org/HowcanIhelp.aspx>.