

## **My Story: PTSD and Recovery**

Excerpt from the book *Friends With Your Mind, How To Stop Torturing Yourself With Your Thoughts*, by Lynn Fraser

In 2005, I lived across the river from downtown Calgary, Alberta in Canada. I loved riding my bicycle to work, even in the winter. One cold November morning I was cycling on the beautiful pathway along the Bow River when I was physically assaulted.

It came out of nowhere, a man running up the river bank. He had no shirt. Shaved head. I had no time to escape. With a couple of running steps, he punched me hard in the side of my head and I flew off the path onto the steep bank of the river. I froze there until I heard a woman screaming. The woman cycling behind me had stopped a few hundred yards ahead, called 911, and screamed for help. Her courage and action saved me.

That began my journey with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Very little was known about it at the time. I found Dr. Peter Levine's excellent book, *Waking The Tiger*. I was fortunate to have a psychologist who diagnosed me, although I didn't believe her at first. She helped me prepare to testify and she told me the most important thing I needed to know in order to heal.

My nervous system had been traumatized and I needed to experience safety to recover. I had been meditating and doing yoga for a dozen years and as much as I could, I created a sanctuary in my home where I could rest and heal. I did guided relaxation and breathing practices like those you can find on my YouTube Channel. I read and watched movies. Slept. I walked alone in the mountains in grizzly bear country where I felt safer than with people.

It was a long journey to healing. Researching led me to explore and understand Developmental Trauma. The events and impact of my teen years began to make sense.

The previous July my son had been misdiagnosed with an aggressive form of lymphoma, with over ninety-five percent of people dying within two years of diagnosis. I was devastated. It was nine weeks before they diagnosed him with mononucleosis and confirmed he did not have cancer.

Between the threats to his life and mine, I began a period of deep reflection about my life, uncovering a lot of confusion, pain, and regret. In 2012, I discovered the Living Inquiries at the same time as I began to learn how childhood trauma affects development in our brains. Medical researchers have learned a tremendous amount about trauma in recent years. I no longer feel any aggression toward myself. As the trauma healed, what was left was patience, compassion, and kindness.