



Beat PD Today Newsletter

Upcoming Programs at the PD Center in East Hartford

March 12: Coffee Chat @ 8:30 a.m.

March 25: Living with PD: Navigating the "What ifs..." @ 2:00 p.m.

March 26: Book Club: *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* @ 2:00 p.m.

[Click here](#) for a printable calendar that includes all our East Hartford classes and special events, like Friends & Family Boot Camp, Yoga Nidra and more! Space for some events is limited. **Please call (860) 906-1726 to register.**



Member Spotlight: Evelyn Foran

Evelyn is 58 years old and was diagnosed with PD nearly two years ago. She attends Beat PD Today classes in East Hartford. Evelyn's story is truly inspirational. She originally ignored symptoms, including a loss of smell and tremor in her left hand. "I was really in denial," she says. But almost from the moment she was diagnosed, she began fighting back.

Evelyn started exercising (including indoor and outdoor cycling, cardio, and boxing), joined an early-diagnosis education/support group (called [PD SELF](#), which she now helps facilitate), participated in a clinical trial, and even started drumming to improve her coordination and mental dexterity.

[Click here](#) to read more about Evelyn, and how she is fighting her best fight against PD -- every single day.

Living with Invisible Illness: Spoon Theory

Have you heard of "spoon theory?" According to Wikipedia, it's: *a disability metaphor used to explain the reduced amount of mental and physical energy available for activities of living that may result from disability or chronic illness. Spoons are a representation of how much energy a person has throughout a given day.*



Please take a few minutes to read this [amazing true story](#) by Christine Miserandino, who talks about what it's like to live with an invisible disease, and the origin of spoon theory.

Recap: Feb. 22 Caregiver Support Group

Thanks to everyone who attended the Feb. 22 Caregiver and Dementia Support Group with Dr. de Marcaida. It was a very successful event, with more than 80 people in attendance. If you have not already done so, please send in your completed surveys.

[Click here](#) to download a list of local resources for people with PD and their caregivers, including home care services, transportation assistance, durable medical equipment providers, and many more. **There will be a follow-up workshop on March 25.** Stay tuned for more information.



Be Worthy of Yourself First by Michelle Hespeler, with guest blogger Vicki Kulas

Many of us have insecurities. Actually, everyone has insecurities. And that is great and normal. We can't be good at everything, but everyone is good at something. Some of us are good at writing, but stink at math. Some are very well read and educated, but have no common sense. Some people are great athletes, but aren't god cooks. You get my point I am sure. Even with insecurities, everyone still has worthiness, and everyone needs to believe they have good qualities to offer to this world. Unfortunately, many people don't think they are worthy of doing good things, or that they are not good enough to do something or voice an opinion.

Before others can think of you as important and worthy, you must first be worthy of yourself and love yourself. You must accept weaknesses and focus on strengths. And that could change as we get older, or it can change when you get a diagnosis of any kind. All people change as we age, with Parkinson's or without. We aren't living in the same world we were 40 years ago and we don't have the same body we had 40 years ago. Our body has worked hard and it slows down and gets tired. We can keep it as healthy as possible, but some things are inevitable. We must accept the new normal. We must embrace who we are today and love ourselves for who we are.

Please read Vicki's story below, where she shares her journey about accepting her new normal. It's hard, but can be done with some mental strength – and determination to be the best you can be, no matter what is given to you. Adapt and overcome.

My New Normal by Vicki Kulas

I recently realized that I need to adjust my mindset and stop trying to compete with my "younger self." My younger self enjoyed sports like gymnastics and biking (I even tried learning how to ride a dirt bike!). I enjoyed speed-walking/jogging and aerobics classes – I felt physically strong. As I aged, the physical strength has remained pretty constant because I've remained active by taking group fitness classes and taking on more physical household and outside chores (helping my husband with snow removal, raking, gardening, etc.).

But ... I've come to the realization that I am aging. My mind is still young and vibrant, but my joints are starting to tell me I need to be more aware of the fact that, like an old car, my parts are wearing out! I have arthritis now and I know I need to stop the high impact, aggressive exercising I was so accustomed to. It's time to take a look at my "current self" and begin treating it with more care and gentleness. I don't intend to stop moving; just to do it with more awareness and forethought.

When I learned that my sister was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, my direction changed from thinking about my own self to how I could possibly share my passion and belief that exercise can really make a difference with people with Parkinson's. Teaching classes for Beat PD Today has given me a true purpose and I love seeing the improvements people are making – not only physically, but emotionally! It also keeps me moving.

I've accepted my "new normal" and will stop competing with my younger self. No matter what, I will continue to exercise, practice positive affirmations and spread kindness.

Beat PDers Fighting the Fight!

