

The Road to Recovery

By Kirsten Woodend, PhD, RN, MSc

I was broken; now I am
mending but I will never be whole,
So where am I on the road to recovery?

Since I will never “recover”,
Is this the wrong road? Is it one of
Adaptation? Can these paths merge?

Sometimes I know how far I have come;
Other times I am intensely aware of my brokenness.
During Holidays, for example.

I cannot do what I used to.
How do I let go of what was?
Would that be a good thing?

The gap between what I was and what I am
is a two-edged sword. I see the difference
and I am driven to accomplish more
and intensely sad about what has been lost.

Accepting might bring more peace.
Would it also bring resignation?
Would I lose my drive to recover whatever I can?

Those around me are protective, confirming
that I am fragile. Does that protection
keep my lack of wholeness ever before me?

How do I move forward?
I have to listen to my body. Some days
it aches and is unwilling to be pushed.

Everything is more work than it used to be.
It is still early on my journey.
Maybe I just need to be more patient,
With myself and with those who want to coddle me.

Being a patient and being patient are hard.
Acceptance might reduce my struggle.
It might also mean the end.
I don't dare accept for fear of wanting death too
much.

So here I am on this forking road: recovery or
acceptance.
I think I will try to find another road built just for me,
Trying to recover, accepting that I won't.

About the Author



Kirsten Woodend, PhD, RN, MSc is on administrative leave after being the Dean of the Trent/Fleming School of Nursing at Trent University for the last decade. During her career she has held numerous clinical practice positions, and teaching, research, and administrative positions in the fields of nursing and epidemiology. She is committed to both her academic and local community, serving on the board of the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing and the board of the Alliance for Healthier Communities; working to address the peer support needs of amputees in her region; and serving as chair of the board of the local nurse-practitioner-led clinic. On a beautiful day in the summer of 2017, she sustained life-threatening injuries, including the loss of her left leg, as a result of a motorcycle accident, giving her the opportunity to live healthcare from the patient perspective.