



The Ménière's Years

Part 18

A Personal Story About

Ménière's Disease

By

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Words of Encouragement

Many people are worried when they receive a Ménière's diagnosis. I understand that. However, I was relieved. Let me tell you why.

My Ménière's Story

After years of not knowing why my tinnitus, dizziness, and fatigue were increasing, it was a relief to finally get an answer. What spurred me on to find a specialist was having violent vertigo attacks that disabled me for days at a time. I had to go from full-time to part-time work with my employer because of the attacks. That was a blow economically as well as personally.



Teaching Judo in Tampa, 2012

I first noticed that something was wrong with me physically when I struggled to teach my students some of the more advanced movements and techniques in martial arts. I had been teaching for about 50 years when I noticed that I sometimes lost my balance when doing spin kicks, teaching students how to throw an opponent, or demonstrating forward and backward Judo rolls. I eventually asked my Black Belt students to do more of the demonstrations so I

could focus on how students were advancing without my getting dizzy.



Receiving the Ménière's diagnosis after being hit with disabling vertigo attacks helped me understand the 'what and why' of my physical limitations. I continued to teach in-

person classes for a few more years after the diagnosis, but I could see that the day was coming when I might not be able to do that anymore — especially as I entered into my mid-70's. The Covid shutdowns also impacted our classes along with my health as I was not able to be as active. I wasn't able to have physical contact with my students for months and noticed that my Ménière's symptoms became worse during that time. I also contracted Covid which slowed me down even more. I knew it was time to make some changes, so I focused on preparing the next generation of Black Belt instructors who could continue teaching my classes if I was unable to do in-person teaching.

The photo below was the last picture of my promoting a Black Belt in person. I had a stroke about six weeks after this picture was taken. I finished a series of 'intra-tympanic steroid injections' on doctors' advice to see if that might slow my Ménière's progression. The stroke occurred a few days after the last injection. It was unexpected, but fortunately I had given most of my martial arts training equipment and weapons to my top students in Florida and Alabama several

weeks earlier. I realized that God may have prepared me for what He knew was coming. I am very thankful to Him for that.



Black Belt Graduation, October 2024

Since that time I have relied on Zoom to teach classes of students in a variety of locations. I can still teach, test, and promote students with the help of my Black Belt students who are leading the classes in person. Zoom also allows me to encourage younger instructors across the country to teach martial arts from a Christian perspective. I miss teaching

classes in person, but I trust the Lord to 'direct my paths' (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Planning For The Future

I realize that if you were recently diagnosed with Ménière's you may not find my story 'encouraging' since the disease is currently incurable and usually progressive. However, keep in mind that not everyone's experience with Ménière's is the same. That goes back to the fact that each of us is a 'Laboratory of One.' Your experience is 'your' experience. It's individual to you. My hope for you is that your experience will be better than mine and others I know.

However, let me add that I believe it's important each of us come to some kind of 'acceptance' about our condition. Find the best medical specialists you can. Follow their advice and discover what works best for you. Ask them to refer you to other specialists if you believe you need more help than they can give you. Also, do your own research from studies and writers you trust.

I promise to keep sharing the best information I can find and recommending other health researchers who can help as you navigate this thing called 'Ménière's.' We all need 'encouragement.'



Next Time

I'll share how Ménière's may impact some of your 'everyday' activities and what you can do about it in the next several Ménière's Years newsletters.

“... rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.” Romans 12:12

Here's to hope!