

## Living with MS

**Elif Nur Yilmaz, a PhD student from the PMSMatTrain project interviewed Engin Ince, a Yoga Instructor diagnosed with MS**

### **1. Could you briefly introduce yourself?**

*I am 40 years old. I graduated from Ege University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity. After working in various newspapers in Istanbul, I started looking for a job with more comfortable working hours and started to work as a copywriter in advertising agencies. After my last MS attack in 2017, I resigned from the agency and gave myself only to jobs that made me happy. I am currently a yoga instructor and a freelance copywriter. I love writing, reading, yoga, morning walks, spending time in nature and in the kitchen, and being with friends that I can be like myself.*

### **2. How old were you when you diagnosed with MS?**

*I was 34 years old.*

### **3. Do you have a family history?**

*Neither my family nor my close relatives have MS. I am the first representative of the family.*

### **4. Which symptoms made you go to the doctor?**

*In 2012, when I was working at the newspaper while locked into the computer, I suddenly felt like a dark grey and flat stripe passed through everything my right eye could see. You know, when the eyeglass lenses get dirty, everywhere illuminates. I was wiping my glasses and rubbing my eyes. It did not change; on the contrary, that line was getting thicker.*

*After going to many doctors, I was diagnosed with Optic Neuritis. The doctor said it was a symptom of MS, that if I did not take care of myself, it could turn into MS.*

### **5. Do you know exactly the type of disease?**

*Relapsing-remitting.*

**6. How did you meet with yoga? Have you practised yoga before? If you have been familiar with yoga before, can you make a comparison between the present and the past? - Difficulty in movements etc. Are you actively working as a yoga instructor?**

*After my last attack in 2017, I started to research how I can follow a path without taking medication. At that time, I came across a report saying, "He beat MS with yoga". I reached the person mentioned in the article; he had more severe attacks than mine. When I read that news, this time I started reading about yoga. Reading information based on anatomy showed that I could look from a more scientific perspective. I wanted to try. When I started, I also had scoliosis and neck hernia. My faith increased when I went to the doctor's control 2.5 months after starting the classes and when I learned that my scoliosis improved, and eight of my nine lesions were passive. Also, when the doctor told me that my cervical hernia was gone, and he said, "How did this happen, Engin?", I sincerely believed that I did the right thing.*

*I did not practice yoga before, but if I make a comparison, I can compare 2017 and now. When I started lessons after the attack, I was taking one-to-one lessons. They would not recommend taking group classes because my muscles were particularly weak. I was having a hard time keeping balance of my body. Now I feel strong, energetic, balanced.*

*I trained three years to teach people in need something that was good for me. I quit my job, and I am actively teaching yoga and giving Yoga Therapy classes that work with diseases.*

### **7. How MS affected your career?**

*I resigned after the third attack. I was working in all three attacks; my employers did not cause any problems with my reports or day-offs for the controls. An awareness occurred in me and when I said, "Working under such stress is not good for me", I was relieved as if I had been keeping a very important secret in me for years and confessed. With the support of my family, I was able to act as I could. It would not be so easy to resign if they did not say, 'We are behind you, and we will support you until we recover'.*

### **8. Have you observed any difference in symptoms with yoga? If yes, could you please explain briefly?**

*After I started yoga, I had no attacks. Therefore, I have no observation of the symptoms. I was moving my house last October, and I was anxious. I felt a slight numbness in my right foot. I panicked at first because the codes of numbness coincided with the attack for me. I meditated frequently during that period, as I experienced that it was good for me to focus. I increased the number of breathing exercises. Therefore, no attention was in numbness. It was faint feelings anyway, after a week I realized that they were absent. At the end of that period, I started taking Organic Intelligence sessions.*

**9. Are there any MS patients you meet through the blog you created? If so, what kind of interactions do you get.**

*Yes, I have met MS people through the blog and the video on YouTube. We are still in communication and talk about each other's experiences from time to time. The majority asks the question 'Can I also get over MS with yoga?' 'I did not get around this disease. I can only say; I am just trying my own way and I keep trying because it feels good.*