

Retired School Bus Driver Asks Doctor,

“Where Have You Been All My Life?”

If you don't know what it's like to suffer, then you may not understand. Let me tell you my story...

My name is Bonnie Hartmann. I have suffered with back pain and back problems for more than 25 years.

It all started when I was just 18 years old and I had polio which resulted in weakness in my leg. Then, to make matters worse, in my early adulthood, I suffered some other injuries which resulted in damage to my spine. Tack on the fact that I drove a school bus for 18 years, and then I drove an armored truck for another 1½ years, and you can tell that all of this **didn't do my back any good**.

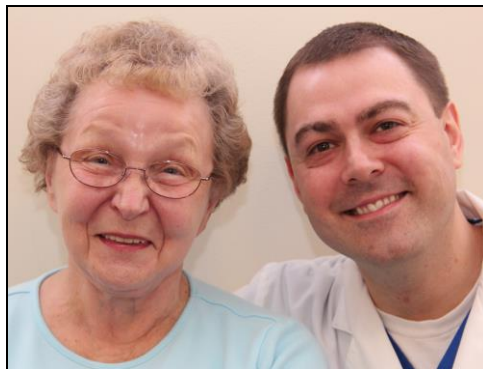
As I sought relief over the years, I tried all kinds of treatments at many different places, but only had marginal success. When I was in my 30s, I had a back surgery where they **cut off part of the bone in my spine** (a procedure called a laminectomy). I took prescription drugs and over the counter pills, which only gave me short-term relief. I had epidurals a few times, which helped for a little while. I used a tens unit, Lidoderm patches, and even went to a chiropractor – but all of this only provided **minimal pain relief** at best.

As a result of all my wasted time and effort I became crabby, irritable, and frustrated. (Wouldn't you?) It reached the point that **I wasn't enjoying life anymore**. Even simple household chores, like washing dishes and cooking a meal, became a very difficult and painful process. It was making my whole life miserable.

For a while, I could go for a walk, and it would help the pain. But eventually, it reached the point where that stopped helping, and I couldn't even make it around the block. Before long, the back pain would get really bad if I simply stood more than just a few minutes. Then it started getting hard for me just to get up from a chair. I **began losing sleep** at night due to the pain, and as time went by, I noticed I would get leg pain if I was overtired. Finally, it reached the point that I became **very unsteady** whenever I was on my feet.

In addition to this, I also had neck pain and I had a hard time driving because I **couldn't turn my head** very far to look

from side to side (thank goodness for side mirrors!) Overall, it wasn't a pretty picture, and I became discouraged and desperate.



Then one day, I saw an article in the newspaper about a woman whom I go to church. The article told how **she had suffered with back pain and leg pain** for several years and how she finally found relief utilizing some newer technology at the Wisconsin Spine Center. So, one morning at church, I talked with Joan about it, and she told me how much Dr. Timothy Kroneck, the clinic director, had helped her – so much that it was **almost unbelievable**. Well, after our conversation, I thought, ‘I may as well give it a shot and see what happens.’

Well, to make a long story short, I started coming here – and guess what? I gradually started getting better! In fact, after my first few visits, **I slept like a baby** all night long – without any problems, which was incredible! Overtime, everything just progressed from there, and I kept getting better and better! As a matter of fact, about a month after I started receiving care at the Wisconsin Spine Center, I told Dr. Kroneck that it was **amazing how much better I felt!**

At this point, I'm **walking straighter** and not stooped over anymore. I'm **sleeping better**, and no longer have constant pain. I feel stronger, more alert, less nervous and more relaxed. I can do my **housework easier**, and I don't have to stop and sit down every few minutes to rest because of pain. I have an easier time walking and standing, and even sitting and **riding in a car** is much more comfortable. I'm even able to walk all the way around the big circle by our house now!

I also noticed I have **more energy**, my toes are less stiff, and my **feet have more feeling in them** than they used to. In fact, most of the numbness in my feet is gone, my balance has improved, and I feel **more stable when I walk!** As a bonus, I can even turn my head from side to side now when I'm driving and **actually see the oncoming traffic!**

Dr. Kroneck is simply wonderful, and he has helped me in so many ways. It's hard for me to express how much I truly appreciate him! As for the rest of the staff at the Wisconsin Spine Center, there's only one word I can come up with to describe them... they're **fantastic!** They're funny and very approachable; and they always explain what they are going to do and answer any questions you might have. They always have a smile and a happy word for you, and they treat you like you're a real person. Really, as I think about it, each time I come here – **it's like coming home!** (To a good home anyway.)

I would tell anybody I know that is suffering with back pain, that they should come here and see what can be done for them, because **it has helped me tremendously**. If you asked me to give you my honest evaluation of the Wisconsin Spine Center, I could sum it up in one word... **perfect!**

Today, I've come a long way from where I was when I first walked into the Wisconsin Spine Center. Though I know I'll never be a marathon runner (and not that I want to), I was thinking the other day about **how much I've improved** since I started coming here. I even asked Dr. Kroneck, “Where have you been all my life?” It sure would have been nice to have known about him years ago, so I wouldn't have had to suffer as long as I did.

It is my hope that by sharing my story with you, perhaps you or someone you know won't have to suffer the way I did, and won't have to say to Dr. Kroneck someday, “**If I had only known** about you years ago, I could have avoided all those years of suffering and pain!”

-Bonnie Hartmann