

I'm Trying

Written by
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Try as I might, getting my head around writing something has been exceedingly more difficult. I am struggling with my thoughts at every moment and find myself having real problems keeping ideas in my head for longer than a minute at a time. Last night I found myself wide awake at 2:00 AM and after fighting for an hour to go back to sleep again I got up and watched something mindless on the television just so I wouldn't be able to think. I lay on the couch until 5:50 AM and still tossed and turned when I went back to bed until I drifted off at around 6:30.

I feel so helpless and I keep mulling the past 27 years over in my mind. I think of the times when I unintentionally allowed my children to be overexposed to the sun. I remember the sunburns they got and the soothing lotion I applied afterwards. Twenty-seven years ago the damage that could be caused to human skin by the warm rays of the sun were virtually unknown. We were still of the era when the browner we were in the summer, the healthier we were presumed to be. And if we saw someone with a deep tan in the winter we would envy him or her because we

knew they had spent some time in the sunny south. How foolish we were!

Heredity also is a factor in melanoma. Therefore my other two children must be more diligent about their sun exposure because their brother has it. Jim's biological father, their grandfather, was a redhead with freckles and I am a fair skinned blonde. My mother avoided the sun at all costs (she never had a tan) and even though she was a brown-eyed brunette, she has several moles and dark birthmarks on her skin, often precursors to melanoma. I don't know if Jay's melanoma is an inherited flaw or if it was caused by overexposure to the sun, but I do know that melanoma is no longer as rare as it once was. It doesn't discriminate and people of both sexes and of all ages are susceptible to it. The most important thing you can do is to prevent sun damage by always using sunscreen and staying out of the sun during the peak hours between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Sun damage can occur on a cloudy day and in any season in Canada as well as the sunny south. Tans are NOT a picture of health; they are evidence of skin damage!