

Karen's Journey – Part 3

Adjusting to tinnitus involves a slow recalibration of the brain. To support this, you need to clear your perceptions and focus all of your energy, not dwelling on the past, but on building a new emotional response that over time will become the dominant 'normal'.

It's been 3 years since tinnitus and I started our journey together. I feel I now have sufficient perspective to describe this final part of my journey. Part 3 as seen steady and stable improvement since Part 2, which I wrote some 18 months ago.

It's fair to say that tinnitus and I have made friends a lot more. Its buzzing isn't the distress it once was, just part of my new normal background state. I've had no anxiety or depression since that I described in Part 1.

I rarely view tinnitus as negative; it does not really feature as anything significant. I choose to hear past this buzzing to the sounds I wish to focus on instead (a point I stressed from Part 2).

There are longer periods – yes days – where I hardly am aware of it. My brain has become more experienced over time at filtering this sound into the background, helped by my relaxed state. All of the factual information on the TAV website, particularly the '4 keys to successful tinnitus management,' does 'ring' true for me (if you pardon the pun).

I struggled to accept this was even possible in my Part 1 journey. Thank goodness, I eventually got so sick of monitoring it every day that I just got on with life regardless. This in turn subtly removed many of the mental barriers I had in place, allowing my mindset to shift.

In my Part 1 journey, I rated my tinnitus annoyance as 9/10. Part 2 - it rated it a solid 3/10. Part 3 would be about a 1/10. Many times, this would be 0/10 as I'm not aware of its presence: when I am aware, it doesn't really bother me at all. This is the honest truth.

Some cultures believe tinnitus is the spirits way communicatinga 'calling from your spirits and ancestors'. Presented in this positive light from the beginning perhaps it helps new sufferers adjust more easily (I have pondered on this since, particularly as one's perception of a new challenge is so important).

It is my greatest hope that reading the three parts to my tinnitus journey provides you, some comfort and assurance that over time, you too will recalibrate your mind to achieve this same level of improvement. Your journey will be your own and you must choose the best path to support your recovery and adjustment. Have the reassurance that others, like me, have travelled a very similar road and come out the other side OK. The first part is the hardest but from there, things slowly and more steadily get better and better. Take care and relax in this knowledge. Please consider writing your own journey to help other people one day.