

At about the age of 20, I had a lump removed from one of my breasts. The operation went fine, but years later, I developed lymphedema. The doctor's told me this was a result of the surgery, and they put me on diuretics. But they don't really work. My legs, and especially ankles, swell up with so much water retention that they hurt. I get tired easily. I have a hard time walking any distances, and I am basically fed up.

I am 39 years old and single, although I was married once. My parents divorced when I was young. My mother left and cut all contact with us until recently, and I lived with my alcoholic father. Then when I was 20 I got married. Things went well for several years, but then the relationship became abusive, so I left. I finally got divorced when I was 30. That's when I was put on major diuretics, had a severe potassium deficiency and almost died. I got off of all the medication and THAT'S when my edema got really bad.

Hoping to stand without pain,
Claire - Memphis, TN

Dear Claire,

The breasts have to do with mothering and nurturing. The legs, as the condition effects both legs, reflect the ability (or non-ability) to stand up for ourselves, or to "stand on our own". Edema results in water build up, and may refer to sadness.

At the age of 20 you "divorced" your dad and stopped mothering him. It sounds like you did the same thing with your husband at the age of 30. One thing we may do when we stop mothering someone is to seek mothering for ourselves. That was absent in your life. You may have (or have had) a thought that you HAVE TO stand up for yourself, and that you HAVE TO stand on your own two feet. I see you standing rigidly "pretending" that you don't need nurturing, but the stress, and the sadness associated with that, builds up until you can't stand it anymore. You end up resting, and once again wishing you could just be taken care of by someone, but that doesn't seem like an option right now.

Positive Thought To Manifest: I release any need I've had to force others to nurture and support me. I ALLOW myself to ask for support in healthy and joyful ways.

Take a break & allow support to come in an infinite number of ways.
Steve