

Interview with Sherri Fincutter

SESSION 1 (6/2/2020)

Timed Log

*Minutes*

- [00:00:00] Difficulty establishing clear phone connection.
- [00:03:32] Introduction into early life. Growing up mainly in Wisconsin but moved around due to father being in the military. Father served during the Vietnam War for almost three years. Lived with grandparents when father was abroad. Has one brother and sister. Struggled financially growing up. Difficult to make friends due to moving around a lot. Mother was also chemically sensitive and miscarried many times, which Fincutter attributes to father's exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam.
- [00:09:43] Realized sensitivity in everyday life was difficult. Exposure at a store when someone sprayed Windex or free sanitizer at a restaurant would cause a reaction. At the hospital, doctors were not helpful. Had to learn on her own to take care of herself through isolating.
- [00:11:44] In her current neighborhood, neighbors spray lawn chemicals and are not accommodating or sensitive to her reactions. Tried to get a safe zone around her house but was denied.
- [00:12:35] Learning more about chemical sensitivities. Mother's reactions have lessened as she is now wheelchair-bound and is less exposed.
- [00:14:01] Husband's job driving a semi exposes him to chemicals. When he comes home, Fincutter becomes exposed as well.
- [00:14:30] Growing up an average student with B and C grades. Picked on at school for not having money and being new.
- [00:15:48] Starting photography business after high school. Went on vacation and came back to find that a flood had destroyed the photography studio. Closed the studio to do portrait and outdoor work, but then became chemically sensitive and closed the business.
- [00:17:50] Exposure that triggered chemical sensitivity happened when she helped parents move and was exposed to a sanitizer neighbor used. Believes it was a hospital sanitizer as neighbor worked at the hospital and would not tell them specifically what she used. Compares symptoms to an incident at Maryland hospital. In 2006, exposure to Weed-B-Gon in store left her

vomiting. Hospital treated with multiple doses of intravenous medicine.

[00:24:56] Difficult experiences with doctors who did not believe her and denied tests. Dealing with sensitivity for twenty years. Has turned to mainly natural remedies. Difficult to see children who work in heating and cooling, or plumbing, and have chemicals on their clothes and shoes that have then been brought into their houses.

[00:28:26] Family not supportive. Reactions include rashes and swelling, and the main problem for her right now is lawn treatments. Mother had dealt with chemical sensitivities but didn't know how to take care of herself and was not helpful. Took a blood test to find out about a missing chromosome in her liver which means her body does not detox. Natural remedies have been helping.

[00:35:42] Sons not affected by chemical sensitivity and are not supportive. Husband grew up on a farm and was constantly exposed to chemicals growing up. Husband now has health issues, including back problems and teeth falling out. Husband's family has had health problems, including lung cancer, severe allergies, and heart attacks. Husband has not been the most supportive (some information redacted).

[00:40:06] Hasn't received mental health counseling for MCS but uses religion to cope. Finds it difficult to vent on social media because police conducted wellness check on her after venting on Facebook. Isolated with few friends and it is difficult to find people to talk to.

[00:44:00] Has two young grandchildren who she last saw in March.

[00:45:08] Activism and advocacy efforts have not been well-received. Sent out informational postcards about the lawn chemical 2,4-D which is used in making Agent Orange and its half-life. Neighbors don't believe her and say she is harassing them with unsolicited mail. Was also laughed at in a town board meeting.

[00:50:26] Has observed decreased wildlife and trees in the area.

[00:51:11] Hopes to see laws passed against lawn chemicals. Incident with a man spraying lawn chemicals on neighbor's lawn during a windy day which blew over and made it look like it was raining. Suggests there could be problems if trucks carrying such chemicals were to get into an accident.

[00:56:38] Roundup and Monsanto are the focus in the media. Uses Pesticide Action Network website to research chemicals that are connected with diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Personally knows 111 family and friends who have or have died from cancer. Monsanto lobbies and

conducts in-house tests which are biased. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* helped start Fincutter's research into her sensitivities as well as her dad's exposure to Agent Orange.

[01:05:44] Wrapping up the interview. Explaining legal agreement and the opportunity to redact things. Wants people to remember that people with chemical sensitivities were healthy at one point.