

Diagnosis of MS has forced me to change my life for the better

By Felicity Moore

TENERIFFE woman Jillian Kingsford Smith feels like she's on a roller coaster. She has gone through a marriage collapse, breast cancer battle (including a mastectomy), and a devastating MS diagnosis and at the end of it all has a best-selling book on Amazon.com.

"It's been... well, it's been amazing," she said. "And I wouldn't change a thing. I've really learned a lot. To have gone through all of that and not learned anything would have been a waste," she said. "I've learned so much."

Ms Kingsford Smith was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis last year after she was hospitalised following a debilitating attack. The diagnosis was a shock, particularly at a time when her marriage was struggling and she was under enormous work stress (something MS sufferers need to avoid in order to trigger attacks, or episodes) on top of battling breast cancer.

A journalist by trade she immediately set about researching how to live with MS and found very little information. So she wrote a resource herself, called *Taking Control*. She interviewed MS sufferers

around the country, including Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale, comedian and former Doug Anthony All Star Tim Ferguson, as well as people without a public profile who have had to readjust their lives and goals following an MS diagnosis.

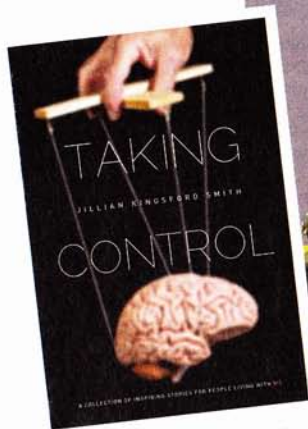
"I don't expect every single interview will speak to every single reader, but I believe in the power of storytelling to transform thinking and my hope is that the reader will find a variety of material that will resonate and provide comfort."

The book was published and released in May, to coincide with world MS Awareness month and very quickly shot up to become a best-selling book on Amazon.com.

At times sad, but mostly inspiring, the book *Taking Control* is a must read for anyone who has MS. It is well written and presents in a very readable, accessible style.

"I hope health professionals and family members will also pick up the book and read it. Life changes for anyone living with MS and this collection of stories demonstrates how to find courage and inspiration while facing change and uncertainty."

Since her diagnosis Ms Kingsford Smith has ditched the stressful



Journalist, writer and MS sufferer Jillian Kingsford Smith

elements of her life and is now focusing on how to accommodate MS while earning a living.

"Writing is a way for me to be productive and make a living. It allows me, on those days where my brain or my body say, "Nope, not today" I can take it easy," she said.

Taking Control contains practical advice and over 100 tips to for anyone living with a chronic illness. Ms Kingsford Smith is already working on book two of a three-book

deal with her next book a practical guide for carers of those diagnosed with MS. She is also ghost writing a biography and says she has no plans to branch out into fiction writing.

For more information, to buy the book *Taking Control*, or to contact Jillian Kingsford Smith visit her website www.Take20Stories.com.