

# 10. Life After the Plot Twist: The Story Behind My Book and Journal

[00:00:00] My bladder and I had a serious conversation and I finally said, "we are done here", and I had to evict it. My journey after surgery has become a handbook and My Plot Twist Journal.

[00:00:16] Hello and welcome back to Leaks, laughs, and Life with a Urostomy.

[00:00:20] I'm your host, Dawn, and if you're new here, this podcast is all about real life after bladder removal. The good, the messy, the funny, and everything in between.

[00:00:32] Before we dive in, I want to gently remind you that I am not a medical professional. Always speak with your surgeon or medical team about decisions regarding your own care. My goal here is to simply create a safe space to laugh, learn, and feel a little less alone.

[00:00:49] I'm sharing my lived experience from my own urostomy journey. And also from my husband, Alex's Neobladder journey. Because bladder free living comes in many forms from [00:01:00] leak disasters to travel hacks, from emotional hurdles to unexpected victories. Thank you for being here. It tells me you showed up on purpose, and that means more than you know.

[00:01:12] Hello, my friends, and welcome back. Today's episode is a special one. Because I finally get to share something I created for you.

[00:01:21] My book, Leaks, Laughs, and Life with Urostomy: The Handbook will be published on this Tuesday, March 31st, 2026, along with its companion journal, I'm calling it My Plot Twist Journal.

[00:01:37] Everything I wrote was created for you, for anyone about to begin, or has just begun to navigate life after bladder removal with a urostomy.

[00:01:47] And it's also for anyone learning to live with a creatively re-plumbed urinary system.

[00:01:54] In January of 2025. My bladder and I had a very serious conversation. [00:02:00] And I finally said, "we're done here."

[00:02:03] This was not a surprise eviction. I fought for this one. Because the way I was living before was not living.

[00:02:11] I was in constant pain with bladder spasms and full on urgency to pee all the time. I was always worried about where the nearest bathroom would be, what might trigger things, and hoping I would be able to make it through another day and night. It took its toll not only on me, but also on my family, physically, mentally and emotionally. I got to a point where I knew something had to change or I was going to die. Literally.

[00:02:42] Did I know exactly what life would look like after urostomy surgery? No, not even close.

[00:02:50] There is no manual that fully prepares you for this surgery. There are helpful people. However, there was not very much helpful information anywhere to be found for living with [00:03:00] a urostomy. I needed help with real day-to-day, how-tos and the little things, the unexpected moments, and the, "is this supposed to be like this" moments?

[00:03:11] I had to figure out as I went along and sometimes not very well.

[00:03:16] Let me tell you. There are moments where you think, "did I really sign up for this? What was I thinking?"

[00:03:24] After my surgery, my papa said to me, you are going to help so many people. And at the time, I had no idea what that meant. A few months into my recovery, I knew exactly what he meant.

[00:03:38] I realized that there were probably others out in this world that also had questions and would love some guidance. Real lived- experience guidance about how to live with a urostomy.

[00:03:49] That is why I wrote this book, Leaks, Laughs, and Life with Urostomy: The handbook.

[00:03:57] I wrote it for you because I [00:04:00] want you to have something that says you're not alone.

[00:04:03] This is possible. You can do this and here's some ideas that might help you.

[00:04:09] For instance, at 2:00 AM in the morning after your pouch is decided to flood your bed. Very, very fun. Not!

[00:04:18] The book is my real lived experiences and the lessons I've learned along the way. I share what worked, what didn't, and what you might expect in your own journey.

[00:04:29] This is not a medical reference, although it might also give surgeons and urologists some insight to the other side of the surgery.

[00:04:37] Inside you'll find practical tools and guidance including building your urostomy toolkit so you have exactly what you need, where and when you need it.

[00:04:49] Leak management 1 0 1 because let's be honest, leaks happen quite often in the beginning.

[00:04:55] There is information about UTIs and the danger of having one with a [00:05:00] urostomy. Also, how to recognize patterns before they come full-blown emergency.

[00:05:05] There's emotional support with exercises to help you process what's happening to your body, your mind, and your life, and so much more.

[00:05:14] This book is meant to guide you, support you, and maybe even make you laugh a little while you're figuring things out.

[00:05:22] But the book can only go so far, and this is where My Plot Twist Journal comes in. I named it My Plot Twist Journal because most of us don't see the surgery coming, and it does change the trajectory of where we thought we were going in life, to leading us down a totally different path.

[00:05:43] This journal is your space, your personal playground for reflection, for tracking and learning from your own discoveries.

[00:05:51] Every time something surprises you, frustrates you, or makes you laugh, you can capture it here. You can reflect, you can see [00:06:00] how far you've come. You can collect your own strategies, solutions, and small wins.

[00:06:05] Think of the handbook as your guide and the journal as your toolbox. The handbook shows you the path. The journal helps you walk through it your way, because it is what this journey is all about, discoveries and detective work.

[00:06:22] Whether something goes wrong or right or completely sideways, there is always something to learn from it.

[00:06:29] Something you can adjust to make the next time just a little bit easier. And the journal is your place to capture those discoveries so they don't slip away. And honestly, some of these discoveries are earned the hard way and need to be recorded.

[00:06:44] For instance, trying a new pouch system right before a trip, bold decision, immediate regret, or wearing something that seemed like a great idea at the time, like tight yoga pants. It was not, definitely not! [00:07:00] Or pouch change day... when your stoma decides this is the perfect moment to become very active. Fantastic timing. Thanks, Stella. That's my stoma's name.

[00:07:13] And then there's the mystery leak. Everything looks fine, everything's sealed, and a couple hours later, something's happening. You feel a weird sensation and there's a little trickle. You are like, "where the hell is that coming from?" This is the moment when the detective work begins, and sometimes it's tricky to find the answers. The Plot Twist Journal gives you a place to track these moments, not just so you can remember how you fix things later as a reference, although it is helpful, but, so you can look back and see just how far you've come because you will forget.

[00:07:49] You think you'll remember. But you will forget how many things you figured out and how you navigated your way through the tough times. This gives you proof that you can reflect upon later. [00:08:00] It will show you how strong you actually are.

[00:08:04] And you're going to have good days. You're going to have not so good days, and some will feel like you have it all together and other days not so much.

[00:08:12] This is normal. No one does this journey perfectly. And what matters is that you keep going.

[00:08:18] If you are on this journey, whether you are about to take the leap or you are just beginning. Or maybe you are assisting someone who's going through this.

[00:08:27] Both of these books are for you because I know what it feels like to be in the thick of things and not have a clue as to what to do and how extremely helpless and frustrating that can be.

[00:08:41] And I know that you are more capable than you think. You're not just getting through this. You're becoming someone who can handle things you never thought you would have to handle. You're learning, you're adapting. You are a survivor, and that is your superpower, and that is no small thing.

[00:08:59] If you're [00:09:00] navigating life after bladder removal and want a little guidance, a little structure, and a whole lot of "you got this" and maybe a little less of those, "well, this is unfortunate" moments.

[00:09:11] My book Leaks, Laughs and Life with a Urostomy: The Handbook and My Plot Twist Journal will be available March 31st on Amazon in the US and internationally. Although the dates may change if you're in like New Zealand, maybe April 1st?

[00:09:28] I created these specifically for you because I've been through the hard stuff. And I want your journey to be easier and less frustrating.

[00:09:38] So before we wrap up today, I have a request. I would love to hear from you!

[00:09:44] In an upcoming episode. I want to be celebrating real wins from people living with a urostomy or a neobladder.

[00:09:51] Big wins, small wins, funny wins, messy wins. I want them all. If you have a story to share, an "aha" moment. [00:10:00] Or something you've accomplished since surgery. Please send me an email at dawn D-A-W-N at leaks, L-E-A-K-S laughs, L-A-U-G-H-S life L-I-F-E.com. So it's dawn@leakslaughslife.com. If you include your mailing address, I have a small token to send you if you do.

[00:10:26] You might even hear your story on the podcast!

[00:10:29] So let's celebrate these wins together. Please share. I would love to hear your stories.

[00:10:35] Thank you for joining me today on Leaks, Laughs and Life with Urostomy. I hope this episode gave a few insights, maybe a laugh, and reminded you that you're not alone in this journey.

[00:10:45] If you found it helpful, please subscribe so you don't miss an episode and share it with someone who might need to hear it. For more information, tips

and tricks or a copy of the show notes, please go to my website@leakslaughslife.com.

[00:10:59] [00:11:00] Next week we're going to be talking about building your everyday kits and your travel carry kits.

[00:11:05] The goal, create confidence, preparedness and avoiding those moments when you're nowhere near your supplies standing in a bathroom thinking, "uh, well, this could have gone better." We're going to make sure you're ready for anything.

[00:11:19] Until then, take care of yourself. Be gentle with your body and remember, this journey has its share of leaks, plenty of laughs and a whole lot of life.