

# Processing Your Feelings by Creating a Migraine Symbol



Creating a migraine symbol can offer a way to process some of the feelings and experience of living with migraine. I don't have to tell you twice that living with migraine can strain your energy, your relationships, your patience - just to name a few challenges migraine poses! Your migraine symbol can represent any myriad of feelings, messages or reminders and can help you process and manage some of the hardship of living with this condition.

I found my migraine symbol in an unexpected place. Creating images of it helped me reclaim some ownership over my disease. During a rare week of respite from chronic migraine, a small flock of blackbirds caught my attention; they were loud, annoying and not very pleasant to look at and yet I enjoyed their confidence. They walked around the grass like they owned the place, pecking at whatever they felt like and then they flew away. Their confidence reminded me of how my migraine condition seemed to have a mind of its own - coming, existing and leaving as it pleased. I wanted to feel as confident as the blackbirds – like I could command and control my migraine condition rather than feeling overpowered by it.

I made several blackbirds – in ink, in watercolor and felted wool and I set them around my home. At first, I just needed to see the birds and get comfortable with their unpleasantness just like I had to get comfortable with and accept the inevitable migraine pain, rather than resist it. And then, I started to connect with the confident birds in a different way. I used them as a symbol of hope – a statement or a declaration that I would, someday, find confidence in managing my migraine pain.

Finding this external image gave me a little space, distance and perspective on my condition. Painting, drawing and felting the blackbirds was very soothing. When I see a blackbird, I'm reminded to honor my journey with migraine, to be patient with myself and to breathe deeply. The blackbird stands for my migraine condition *and* my ability to manage it well.

Choose a symbol for your migraine condition and express it in some way – draw it, sing about it, write a poem, take a photo of it. Put your symbol around your home where you will see it often. When you see this symbol in your everyday life, remind

yourself to breathe deeply, honor your journey and be patient with your healing process.

