

Who would have thought Bones for Life/Movement Intelligence would possibly save my life?

My sister invited me to go hiking with her and her boyfriend, a challenging climb on any day at Mount Si.

I am in good shape for a 41-year-old, didn't think this climb would be very difficult at all.

We pulled into the park around Mount Si, part of Washington State's Cascades, everything blanketed with a light two inches of snow. Interesting, I thought . . . there was little to no snow back at her house in Seattle. The way the light glimmered from the snow on the trees was beautiful. We packed our backpacks with food, water, a blanket -- all the usual things for a normal afternoon of hiking -- and set out on our way away from the car and up the beginning trail of the mountain.

Almost immediately, I began noticing that I was slip-sliding on the snow-covered trails up the flatter base of the mountain. I looked in front of me to see that my sister and her boyfriend seemed to be doing just fine, their boots gripping the ground below the snow much better than my hiking shoes. I stopped to look at the bottom of my shoes, the tread nearly worn down to nothing. We had a long way to go to get to the top, at least two hours. Hikers passing us had trekking poles, some even had crampons on their boots. The climb was getting steeper with every step. I could feel the anxiety rising in my guts. What was I going to do?

We had paused for a rest, and just as I admitted within my own self that I needed help, the perfect hiking stick could be found to my left. I gratefully picked it up and soon was leading the pack.

The movement and the power with the stick was familiar, one of those a-ha sensations of goodness, of ease. When I dug the stick into the ground in front of me to claim some grip with my feet on the icy snow, I let the stick remain in that spot as I passed it and pushed into that same spot on the ground to feel the propulsion from the rear -- just as we do with our hand on a chair in *Water Carrier's Walk #2* and eventually with trekking poles in *Walk for Life*. Not only was I no longer needing to worry about my shoes on the icy snow, I was finding my posture as I walked, finding the power of the arm-swing to propel me forward with power and ease.

I reached the top of the mountain long before my co-hikers and enjoyed the view, amazed by the birds there eating right out of my hands.

We could stay only so long up there before we felt frozen and needed to make our way back down to the warmth of our car. But we weren't the only things that had frozen since our climb up the mountain. The path that was in the sun on the way up had become a sheet of ice in the shadows. My sister and her boyfriend wiped out a few times very quickly as we began down the mountain. Not to fear, I thought, I have my trusty stick. But even it was useless. I panicked, and slipped myself a few times. How were we ever going to get down the mountain safely, especially with all of these dangerous switch-backs that near the cliff's edge here and there?

I scanned my memory. What did I know about movement that might help here? I slipped again and banged my knee pretty hard. And as I fell, I noticed that it seemed to happen each

time my heel hit the ground, like the full length of the shoe on the ground and the position of my weight on my feet was what was causing the issue. Hmm. I remembered something about that, how Cynthia Allen, our Bones for Life and Walk for Life teacher, had showed us the Up and Down a Slope/Stairs to get downhill safely, especially with slippery things like gravel beneath our feet. Would it work on an icy slope? I'd already fallen twice, what did I have to lose?

I had fallen behind and was now picking up speed as I pranced down the icy mountain-trail on the balls of my feet as if the ground were hot-coals. How strange, I thought. It was so easy, and I was moving quickly because I knew that my wipeouts on the well-slanted trail down the mountain seemed to happen when I moved slowly and cautiously with my full foot on the ground. It also felt like my weight seemed to shift forward on the balls of my feet as I danced down the mountain.

What amazed me is that I did not slip once when I stayed on the balls of my feet, though every time I slowed down and put my full weight on that flat shoe, it was like the ground was pulled out from under me.

I was grateful when we found our way back to the base of the mountain and our car. My knee was hurting quite a bit from the second fall I had had near the top of the mountain--before I remembered the process that eventually saved me up there. While my sister and her boyfriend visited the restrooms before we loaded up in the car, I played with Knee Bends a Knee and found that everything seemed to find its place again, and my knee no longer hurt like it had all the way down the mountain from the fall.

We got into the car and smiled at the beauty of the snow and setting sun, very grateful that we had all made it safely and soundly up and down the mountain.

Who would have thought Bones for Life would be so helpful in a dangerous situation in which I had found myself!

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P.S. And by the way, from the amazing view at the top of the mountain, Seattle looks like Oz, a tiny principality in this massive valley between mountain ranges. But the real Wizard that day, I discovered, is within us when we know how to work with our body, provide some choices, and trust its inner (neurological) wisdom.