

### The Merry-go-round

It strikes me forcibly at the moment, while I am away from work, at home, just how strange it is not to be living life at the same hectic pace most people live it. I think I may have written before in this vein, about how chronic illness can isolate, but these days, what with my 'empty nest' there is a greater feeling of separateness from the 'crowd', of being 'out of sync'.

I literally can't keep pace with others. It's rather like getting off a merry-go-round; you know, the old fashioned ones with prancing horses: all loud music, bright colours and motion.

In comparison, I tend to feel at best slow, at worst, completely static. As the person on the ground, we have choices I guess: We can stand and watch, stationary. The people on the ride whizz past in a blur and it is scarcely possible to focus on their faces, less still to communicate with them, apart maybe from a wave and a smile and a quick shout of recognition.

I guess for those on the ride, they see a person standing waiting for them to 'come around again', and each time they complete a revolution, there the person is, not having moved. The person on the ground doesn't experience the rush, the joy of the ride, can't share in it fully (although of course, to be permanently caught up in the ride must get tiring and even monotonous).

We could choose to try to run around keeping pace with the ride as it revolves but even an athlete probably couldn't keep that up for long so for those of us with pain, it just isn't an option!

We could try to grab onto something and hop on, but will then be perched precariously which won't be sustainable or enjoyable, that's for sure, and we will still be 'below' the others gloriously seated on their fairground steeds.

So, whatever we do, this gives a tremendous sense of dislocation and a sense of 'missing out'. But on a more upbeat note, at least we can 'opt out' and walk away from the dizziness inducing

ride, we have freedom to change our perspective and I suspect some on the ride may secretly envy us that freedom (but not of course, the source of it!).