

# KELLY J. MENDENHALL

**Author, Speaker, Creator,  
Activist**

**#StopMedicalGaslighting**

Kelly J. Mendenhall is a self-proclaimed recovering nonprofit professional. She earned her Bachelor of Science and Master's in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University in 2007 and 2012, respectively. She dedicated her career to the service of under-resourced youth and communities. In June of 2017, Mendenhall suddenly became medically disabled and lost her mobility nearly entirely. However, the cause of her pain and immobility remained a mystery for more than two years.

Mendenhall made a name for herself on the digital scene as a medical journalist and blogger, writing for the website **BlastingNews.com** in 2018, **SpineNation.com** from 2019-2021, as and her own blog, **Nerdzilla Lives!** from 2017-2020. On June 1, 2019, Mendenhall released her first book, a memoir: ***Skin in the Game: The Stories My Tattoos Tell***, and received rave reviews. Mendenhall co-hosted a successful indie podcast from 2018-2020. She was featured in **Yahoo! News and Business Insider** in 2020. All these accomplishments were achieved while Mendenhall was mostly restricted to life on a couch, on her back, with minimal mobility.

Beginning in 2017, Mendenhall endured years of what she refers to as **Medical Gaslighting**. Simply put, she was told time and again by specialists and medical professionals that *there was no way she was experiencing pain, loss of feeling and control of extremities, and other symptoms reported*. It took 2.5 years of fighting against medical gaslighting to discover a rare, centralized disc rupture at the junction of her thoracic and lumbar spines that had grown into a calcified mass, crushing her spinal cord.

Mendenhall endured four neurosurgeries, two major abdominal surgeries between December 2018 and October 2020, and hundreds of tests, procedures, and diagnostic labs. She was permanently disabled by age 40, and has been unable to work outside of the home since age 34. She has not allowed her disabilities to rob her of her self-worth.



## (Mendenhall, Continued)

Mendenhall's background as a social scientist made her curious about whether or not her experiences with medical professionals were unique, or if other women were experiencing the same difficulties in finding compassionate care. Her research led her to the conclusion that women are regularly suffering from and under-treated for chronic pain.

Mendenhall concluded that there is an implicit bias against women reporting pain and other chronic, invisible symptoms throughout Western medicine. And, ultimately, medical gaslighting is killing and disabling women every day.

These conclusions, together with her history as an impassioned and loud-mouthed human rights activist, inspired her to raise awareness to stop medical gaslighting or die trying.

"This is my way of turning my mess into a message," Mendenhall often says.

Kelly is passionate about guiding others, especially spine patients and women living with chronic pain, to be their own best advocates in healthcare, life, and in their careers.

After a two-year virtual hiatus, Mendenhall re-introduced herself to the digital scene in December 2022. In January 2023, she announced a new website, new projects, and ideas, including the **#AffordableArtRevolution**. Most recently, Mendenhall was the keynote speaker at **Disability Awareness Day in March, 2023**, put on by Disability Advocates of Kent County in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

### Popular Keynote Topics include:

- Turning a Mess Into a Message: Self-Advocacy and Radical Self-Care
- A Stitch in Time: How Creating Saves My Life a Little Bit Every Day
- Medical Gaslighting: What it is and how to fight it.
- Mindset over Matter: Life happens for us, not to us, and you are the hero of your own story. Act like it.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT KELLY AND HER VARIOUS PROJECTS, VISIT [KELLYJMENDENHALL.COM](http://KELLYJMENDENHALL.COM). TO CONTACT KELLY, YOU MAY EMAIL HER AT [HELLO@KELLYJMENDENHALL.COM](mailto:HELLO@KELLYJMENDENHALL.COM) OR REACH HER BY PHONE AT 734-470-0145.**

