# My Fatigue Is Different

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"I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it." ~ Maya Angelou

When I talk to people who don't have multiple sclerosis, they always try to find some kind of way to relate to me. Which is good. But usually, as the conversation evolves, I can see the confusion on their faces when I try to explain my situation.

Most don't understand my aches. And probably never will. They don't identify with the numbing and tingling. And to them, wall walking is some new teenage slang word.

But then I mention I'm always tired and their faces light up. It's because everyone can relate to tiredness. So they attempt to make a deeper connection through stories of being exhausted from playing with their kids or having to cook dinner after work.

I try to hide my frustration while they provide solutions like a 10-minute nap, energy drinks or just powering through that worn-out feeling.

I point out that MS fatigue is not like that. It's so different. But, they don't understand how my "tired" is not the same as their "tired". It's because most people have never been incapacitated by extreme fatigue. For the average person, it's a fleeting moment in the day. But for me, it's a daylong ordeal. I wake up tired. I function all day tired. And I go to sleep tired.

I even mention the medications I use to give me energy. It's the only thing that keeps me going. And even though, I'm still weary after taking those meds, it makes the fatigue more bearable. Because when I don't take anything, I hit rock bottom. And once that happens there's no coming back. I'm usually done for the day. Those are the times I just sit in it. I sit in the fatigue as it strikes like a plague swarming my entire body. Bashing me like a cannon ball to the stomach. Nearly knocking all the life right out of me.

For some reason, even after I have enlightened them, most people still don't truly comprehend MS fatigue. But I appreciate those who try to understand. It lets me know that empathy is alive and well.

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