What Does Not Kill You Makes You Stronger

July 17, 2017 By Nicole Lemelle

“The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” ~ Mark Twain

I calmly said to my husband as he drove me to my bi-weekly hairdresser appointment, “I wonder when I’m going to die?”

He didn’t flinch. He didn’t even look at me. He just kept driving the car and asked, “Is your period on?”

I told him, “That is beside the point.” Even though, between you and me, it actually was on.

But my statement wasn’t driven by a mood swing. It was more introspective. Sometimes I get reflective when things aren’t going my way. Those times when life feels like a constant uphill climb. I morbidly tend to wonder when all the struggling is going to be over. When will everything get a little easier? Not that I want to rush to my demise but my mind seems to sometimes drift in that direction.

So when I find myself in that somber space, it comforts me to remember when my situation was worse than it is now. And I think about how far I’ve come.

There was a time, after a bad exacerbation, I was in a medical center for a month. A two-week hospital stay and a two-week inpatient rehab stay. Back then my utmost concern was just making it through the day. I needed assistance with everything. When I finally went back home, I couldn’t even feed myself. And worst of all, no one knew how much of my lost abilities I would regain.

So looking back at that moment in my life usually snaps me out of any pity party. But this time I remained somewhat tense.

My husband must have seen I was still a bit agitated and responded with, “The best you can do is live your life to the fullest. That’s all any of us can do. We all contemplate about death. That’s normal. But me, I plan on living for a long time. My goal is to live to be about 150 years old.”

We both laughed. But secretly, I do hope he lives a long life. It’s because I want to die before him. Is that strange? I just can’t imagine being a big burden on anyone else.

Don’t get me wrong my health is stable. I’m going to the gym as often as possible. I take my medication and I pray to the Universe for my well-being. And I understand at the end of the day, even if I don’t like my circumstances, it’s my responsibility to make the best of the life I’m blessed to have. Others aren’t so lucky. With a few exceptions, most of my life with MS has been a multitude of unpredictable inconveniences. But it’s not deadly.

So as we entered the hair salon, my husband jokingly said to me, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

And I answered back, “If that’s true, people with MS must be superheroes.”

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