Shared Plights

April 1, 2014 By Nicole Lemelle

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."- Maya Angelou

I had my usual visit with my hygienist last week. Well, actually I haven't been to see her in six months. So, I really didn't remember who she was. When she entered the room we had to reintroduce ourselves to each other. I should say, she remembered me, but my MS mind didn't remember her.

She asked me how my husband was doing, actually calling him by name. Then she asked how my MS was treating me. I told her everything was fine.

I, in return, inquired about her life. She looked at me and said, "I'll tell you this because you can probably relate." Then she continued to share with me her very personal recent medical encounter with ovarian cancer and subsequent chemotherapy. I was only expecting a small talk reply so you can just imagine how taken aback I was.

Immediately I realized how tenuous it was for her to even be at work. According to her story, it seemed like she had pain, got diagnosed, surgery, chemotherapy and then was right back to work all within a few weeks time. Of course, it wasn't actually that streamlined, but it sure sounded like it.

I couldn't help but feel a shared sense of underlying hope with her as she told me her story. We talked more as she cleaned my teeth and then we parted ways.

Although our plights can be significantly different, it seems at the end of the day we all just want to be heard. I think it helps us to free our innermost concerns and worries with those that can understand the best. And that's usually someone who is in a similar situation.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.