Still Trying

December 8, 2015 By Nicole Lemelle

“Fear is not in the habit of speaking truth.” ~ Tacitus

(A conversation I had with my husband on the drive home from a party in 2011)

Were you watching? Could you see me struggling?

When I said I was all right, that wasn’t true. I don’t know if I was fooling everyone or just fooling myself. It’s just these pins and needles have me feeling funny. You can see it in the way I move. The way I use the wall to stand. All night I couldn’t feel my feet and my right leg was totally numb.

I hate going to crowded parties. I know I look crazy. Stumbling around the room, pretending it’s normal. But what else could I do? Wall walking keeps me afloat so I don’t drown.

Wait, someone said I looked drunk?

I promise, I wasn’t. I know I was slurring my words but I haven’t had a cocktail in years. That wasn’t liquor they smelled. That was steroids on my breath. I take enough of those to make anyone drunk.

Faking has become second nature to me. I’ve conditioned myself to smile through the pain. Most times, I’m over in the corner hoping no one notices me. Hiding from reality. And when I come out, I return to lying about what I’m really feeling.

But if you look closely, you can see it in my eyes. That’s where the truth is. Where nothing can hide. My eyes show my reality. My face holds the details.

People constantly ask me, “How are you doing?” My voice always deceitfully trembles when I answer, “It’s going great”. I’ve said it so much that my mouth stays dry from swallowing so many lies.

But now, I can barely form the words to tell that untruth again. It hurts when I fake like everything is okay. Because everything is not always okay. MS is not fun. I can’t continuously put on a happy face just to make everyone comfortable. I did it for years. But I can’t do it anymore. Sorry to disappoint you. It has become too overwhelming to keep pretending. My mind doesn’t work like that.

I am not saying I’ll be the person at the party killing all the fun by making everyone sad. But, from now on, when I’m feeling bad and someone asks me, “How are you doing?” I’m going the tell the truth and say, “Not too good today, but I’m still trying.”

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/blog/still-trying