POZ Stories: Kecia Johnson

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Kecia Johnson

Kecia Johnson clearly remembers the events leading up to her HIV diagnosis. It was November 2006 in Houston, and she was under the weather. “I had the chills and did not feel like my normal self,” she recalls. “After visiting a friend, I took a shower, and after about three minutes everything went blank. I remember waking up in an ambulance.” Hospitalized nearly three weeks with severe pneumonia, she had no idea what was wrong. Then a doctor walked in and asked, “How have you been coping with your AIDS?”

Fact is, she has been coping just fine, thank you. “I came out of the hospital not shedding any tears,” she says. “I vowed that I was going to educate the world on the importance of self-worth and self-education on the HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

Johnson believes that a lack of self-esteem led to her HIV status: She had stayed with a boyfriend she suspected wasn’t faithful. “I knew something was wrong,” Johnson says, “but I continued to ignore the signs—I felt nothing could go wrong because I was in love.”

Today, she is surviving and thriving in Los Angeles, where she’s using her skills and connections—she has worked in the music industry as a manager and brand specialist—to educate through music. She created her own company, Absolutely Sikning Inc., to empower those living with HIV and other illnesses, and she released a memoir, Dying To Be D.I.V.A. (Visit iamkeciaj.com for more info.)

Johnson describes herself as “fabulous, fierce and aware.” And we’d have to agree. Who else would offer this optimistic outlook: “Everyone living with HIV/AIDS needs to know that we are on a special, select journey and we have been called to walk that life. Our walk just happens to be in the color red!”

To read more about Kecia Johnson and other POZ Stories, or to tell your own tale of empowerment, visit poz.com/stories.

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