My 33-Year HIV Anniversary

March 25, 2020 By Shawn Decker

Tomorrow will mark the 33-year anniversary of my positive test result for HIV. I was 11 when my family and I received the news...

My parents were informed that I had anywhere from 6-months to two years to live. Naturally, my mom's goal for me far extended that: she wanted me to live to see my high school graduation. That was triple the length of the time allotted by that grim prognosis.

The fates, thankfully, had other plans. I've officially lived three quarters of my life with HIV now. Everything from pre-teen on has been navigated through the interesting influence of a much-feared medical condition. The deep-seeded fear of having to deal with some end-of-life drama due to the virus slowly dissipated over time and, with each passing week, month and eventually year instilled confidence. And, once my own fear was gone, I found myself in a position to help rescue others from those same fears.

I've lived to see many beautiful things beyond high school graduation- including these interesting times that we find ourselves in right now.

Right now we all need to take care of ourselves. We need to support healthcare workers. I gotta say, without my favorite nurses and doctors my life would be very different. They showed me so much love in some of the scariest times of my childhood. As an adult, whenever a medical situation pops up (few and far between, thankfully!), it's the nurses that help make the situation run as smoothly as possible. I may not know them on a first-name basis the way I did when I was a kid, and I may never see them again, but the tremendous respect that I have for what they do remains the same.

Well, now it's a very scary time for THEM. And the best way I can help is to stay put. My viral dancecard is already full, anyway, though I do get a free sub sandwich if I check off just one more box... what could go wrong?

Kidding aside, please stay safe out there. Do what you need to do to stay sane. Be healthy. There is light on the other side of this tunnel, but look for the cracks in the tunnel itself... that's where the light can be the most beautiful.

Maybe that's because you have to work just a little bit harder to see it?

Positively Yours,

Shawn

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