5 Rules To Finding True Love Living with HIV

November 10, 2015 By Joseph Burke

It’s hard enough going through life with some small sense of normality, but walking down the pathway of life with a chronic illness can be enough to make one’s head swim with anxiety. One of the biggest things I hear not only as a care counselor in church, but a leader among my church’s life groups and outspoken advocate of the hemophilia and HIV community is that people simply want to be loved. Being alone and with a bleeding disorder, HIV or both is enough to make some not even chase the dating game, or detour them altogether from discovering the great, "*what if’s*" of life.

To be honest, it’s not easy being in your 20’s, 30’s or 40’s - living life single and alone. Compound that with living HIV positive, while attempting to find your soul mate, it can be a towering behemoth most would flee from. Finding someone who is "*in the know*" can be rare, much less finding a partner educated enough to understand your disease, rather than run from it. HIV is a big

deal, and it impacts everyone around you from family, friends and dating.

This list may not translate to every single person living with HIV, Hemophilia or Hepatitis C, but contains enough of foundation to get you started in the right direction for true love. Often times, the biggest hurdle we have to face isn't dating itself, it's our own reflection looking back at us. Once we conquer the skewed image we have of ourselves, and truly realize our worth, we can become empowered not only to find true love, but change the lives of everyone around is.

1. **Circle of Trust** - Friends are a precious commodity this day and age, and it's vital that we surround ourselves with friends who are educated, in the know, and will be there for you to love, comfort and listen when you need it most. A great group of friends not only provides a solid foundation, but also helps us launch into new and otherwise uncharted areas. They encourage us, motivate us, and make us feel wanted; that's important for self esteem. Friends also help us stay accountable, socially aware and are constantly engaged in conversations and real life situations. ***Remove toxic friends, and find ones that elevate your spirits to new horizons.***

2. **Don't Believe the Naysayers** - One rule of thumb I always encourage people to take to heart is, "***you are NOT your disease!***" Many of us have been told lie after lie, that we're not good enough, it's pointless, and we're just going to get our hearts shattered. Don't be bound by being a mere label, rather, be an impact on someone's life. Stop listening to the grumpy people who try to dictate what they think is best for you, and start empowering yourself to take a chance every once in a while. If you're true to yourself, people will naturally gravitate towards you, and the naysayers will fade away like yesterday's celebrity gossip column.

3. **Stop... Breath... Focus** - If we concentrate all our efforts on this one thing, to find true love, and we relentlessly focus on that one objective, while avoiding our surroundings, we will gradually loose sight and will need to refocus our efforts. Don't focus all your attention on finding your significant other, rather work on being the best **you,** you can be; every moment, every day. ***Remember, your one thought away from contentment.*** Grumbling is actually more toxic and contagious than any other action we can do. Instead, be content, in the moment, and thankful for where you are, and what you have - not what you don't. So stop, get your bearings, take a deep breath and refocus your goals.

4. **Simply the Best** - If you're single and reading this, let's face one fact, ***you just have you***. Work on making an impact, and other's will take notice of your efforts. True love isn't found in an online dating app, it's discovered when volunteering for the local charity organization helping others. When you're truly happy and content with your life and where you are, it's typically in those moments others take notice and are attracted to your self esteem and independence. I've never met a single human being who strays from a confident person, have you? Sure some days are better than others, I understand that sincerely, but approach each day as a new opportunity, rather than a burden.

5. **Honesty is the Best Policy** - When I first found my true love, and later married her the following year, I reflected on the fact that I was open and honest with my partner. I told her my diagnosis' and some of the challenges I face daily. ***A true partner will not flee, rather gravitate towards honesty and humility.*** I prayed over ten years for a perfect companion to come my way, but I first had to work on me, and get over the "implanted thought" of being a sick person with

complications. It’s not complicated, it’s life.

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