And What About Dating-Part Two!

December 28, 2013 By Rae Lewis-Thornton

Often times the holidays seems to compound the loneliness and isolation of a single person living with HIV. I know for me this has been the case. No doubt dating with a sexually transmitted disease is hard: The having to disclose; having to explain the how I got to this place; The fear of judgements and rejection. The shame with acknowledging your choices and for some even your culpability in your infection; the self loathing that comes with why you choose to trust the very person that infected you, whether it is HIV or herpes.

Out if my own loneliness and isolation I've been thinking about dating a lot as of lately. People think being this famous woman with AIDS means that I'm not lonely, but at the end of the day I still come home to myself. I have no one to wine down my day, even if with just a phone call. I give so much to help enrich the lives of others but get very little to enrich my own life. This is my situation living with this disease. In my last blog about dating I talked about men willing to date me in private but not public and my decision to shut that down out of self respect and love for myself.

But where does that lead me and how do I meet that special someone? Even as an AIDS Activist I'm still faced with the same issues others with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are living with. Disclosing your HIV status to a potential partner is scary. That is true no matter how long you have lived with HIV or how many times you have disclosed or even how public you are. To have that first conversation with someone that you are attracted to is hard and leaves knots in your stomach.

Just recently I told a man after our initial conversation that I had drug resistant herpes. Let me tell you, I didn't exhale until he said, "I read that in one of your blogs," and we went on to the next topic. I like this guy, so we will see where it leads. *giggles* To his testament he didn't drill me on how the hell I ended up with two sexually transmitted diseases. There were no judgments or backtracking on his part. But in those first 60 seconds my mind raced pass the conversation to my own fears. What will he think of me with both HIV and herpes? Will having two diseases be a deal breaker? Even that self-loathing became a part of my mental drama. As I was rambling on about

my herpes I was thinking, “Girl how did you end up here?” But at the end of the day you can’t change the course of history, all you can do is accept your journey for what it is and try to be your best you with what you got.

So dating is challenging for us all! Since that last blog on dating, I’ve had so many people reach out to me privately about their own drama around dating with HIV. One woman emailed and asked, "So what about those positive dating sites?

I got to tell you, I see them as an easy way to get pass that first level of fear; rejection. You don’t have to have that initial conversation because the person reaching out to you already know your baseline. Now I’ve got to be honest, a while back like 7-8 years ago, I did a free trail weekend for one of those poplar dating sites that advertise on tv, but based on what I said to the guy he googled me and that was a deal breaker *shrugs* his lost because I’m a wonderful woman.

Now recently, I signed up for PositiveSingles.Com. I wanted to see what they are about for myself since I’m recommending them to you. Now, like I said, I actually met a guy recently and it’s very early, not sure where it will lead, good places I hope so I’m not sure how long I’ll stay on a dating site. I try to have integrity. Plus, I’ve always been a one men kinda woman.

But what I know for sure about the dating sites is that the person reaching out will at least know your base line when they send that first email. I think a dating site like this could be a way to get the conversation going and sometimes all you need is an open door. So what the heck, you really have nothing to lose but time. For sure you should work within the parameters of the site and be honest. I mean no point lying on a site where everyone has a sexually transmitted disease. I think it’s a level of freedom actually, everyone is at the same starting point.

Think about it this way, you know right off bat that you are not being rejected because of your status. With your status out of the way, you can now go fourth and see if there is compatibility. Now let me be honest, everyone with HIV is not going to be a perfect match, sometimes you gotta work through the barrel to find that right apple.

At the end of the day I think that we should fight the isolation that comes with this disease. I also think that we should use all the great tools of modern technology to do so! Each of us deserve to be loved, and none of us deserve to have HIV. By forcing yourself to live in isolation, you punish yourself and that is not what God wants of us! When we wake in the morning we are still a part of

God’s earthly plan, so I think we should live our best life while we have a life! 2014 is fast approaching why don’t you step out of your comfort zone and see what is waiting on the other side of fear of rejection.

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