Being Thankful

November 22, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

As we come up on the Thanksgiving holiday, this is a perfect time to reflect and recognize all the events and people that have brought me blessings this year.
I first have to thank God. Being connected spiritually with him has made dealing with life so much easier. I won't lie, in my early days of my diagnosis I used to be angry at him, gave him the silent treatment and refused to speak his name out loud. But amazingly, he never gave up on me. He was always consistent through my inconsistency. And like the lyrics of the song states, "I never would have made it without you." And coming up on 25 years of living with this disease I know that he's there with me until the end and beyond.

In a weird way there's a certain thanks to having HIV. Believe me if given another chance I wouldn't want it but the fact is that I do have it and it has taught me the value of living a true fulfilled life. It has placed things in perspective and made me reflect on what is important and what is minor. It's given my life drive and a purpose. My cup runneth over when I know that the only person who can stop my dreams is me and I'm to busy building my dreams for me to be my own destroyer of my goals. Yet it hasn't always been the most fabulous journey but I've walked many trails and been able to walk through doors that I thought were closed to me, now opened for me to experience a true rich life.

I thank the many friends and people I've met who has accepted me for who I am and not judge me for what lies in me. Those who have given me words of encouragement or affirmations and walked toward me and never showed me their backs. I'm also thankful for the people who are honest with their lack of knowledge and honest enough to admit it. We're sometimes learning together as the rule book is different for everyone who is positive, yet your openness doesn't bring offense but a opportunity to teach. And that learning is a two way street where I'm enriched by you.

I also have met some incredible people who are living with the virus and they give me inspiration as they give me new challenges through their challenge. We're talking about people who speak publicly about their status, people who have run around the entire city of NYC not letting their status hold them back and those who stand in the face of stigma and faced it down daring anyone to deny them the same rights as others. The passion that you extend feed my creativity and fill my soul. You do what you do not for accolades but because its what in your heart.

Of course I save the best thanks for last and that thanks is for the people who have put up with my ranting and ravings on the 20+ blog. You've let me be raw and naked with my emotions. You allowed me to not hold back and find a way to release built up frustration. Even when I come off as a Pollyannna you stayed with me. Sometimes I've offended people which was never intentional but you calling me out on some of my writing gave me another way at looking at the subject. And I appreciate each bitch slap back to reality as I'm still trying to figure this virus out after 24 something years.

The greatest thing is knowing I helped someone or made someone feel like they were not the only one going through something made me feel like my words had value. You looked beyond the typos and found something you could identify with. In the sharing you've told me about your own struggles and each time I'm reminded that despite our status, we're all going through something but whether we face success or adversity, we can learn how to not just 'handle' it but to take advantage of it. If we want to succeed in life, I've learned we must learn how to make the most of both victory and defeat because we're certain to encounter both along the way.

So this year I give thanks and know that although there may be times when I feel lonely I'm never alone.

Thank You

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