Deconstructing My HIV

July 30, 2013 By Aundaray Guess

I know early on when I found out about my HV diagnoses I had the question most may ask. Why me? Why did I have to get this disease and have it impact my life? What did I do wrong? Was God mad at me or was he trying to teach me a lesson? My life was supposed to have been different and this was not the way I had planned. They say everything happens for a reason but why was this my example and what was the reason? Wasn't there another way I could make an impact? In looking at these questions and trying to find the answer I had to deconstruct my HIV and reconstruct it in so that I could find the meaning. I had to do this and after all these years go back and find the meaning of my HIV status.

I remember the years when I was told my status. I was in a literal free-fall. I simply felt I no longer had a purpose. I had stepped into the unknown and with little answers I felt I was on my own. I was a quiet child and kept to myself. I had yet to find my voice. My experience like almost everything at that age was still new as I had yet made it out my teen years. I think along with the question of who was going to love me I also asked myself how I was going to love myself.

The one thing I didn't like about my status is that it made me passive. I was not in a place where I was looking out for my interest but I was more concerned how others would react or feel about me being positive. That was one of the reasons I had a hard time with disclosure as telling someone your HIV status placed me in a passive position in waiting to see how they would respond. Holding my breath preparing for their reaction, leaving my fate in their hands. Like an innocent puppy I accepted this role and when I told my truth and was rejected for it I was more angry at myself for placing myself in a position to be rejected. I learned the word humble very early. I learned not to disclose.

I walked with anger or rather I let the anger of my situation control me. Many people see me as this respectable and educated person now but they didn't witness my dark period. It was a time when I woke up angry for no reason. It worked for me or at least I though as it helped push people away. That's what I wanted. I didn't want anyone to understand me or join me on my journey. I didn't want my guard down to once again place myself in a position to be rejected. I was unaware that I was also setting myself up for isolation and the depression that usually accompany it.

Finally finding someone I could tell my secret to they still had no idea what I was experiencing. Many people who don't have HIV believe that they can read stories or articles and have a sense of how it is to live with HIV. Honestly there's simply no way to communicate all the nuances of living as a positive person. It's not just about taking a pill or making sure to see your doctor regularly. It's now a part of your character and an aspect that stays tucked in the back of your mind finding

little moments to remind you it’s still with you. There are aspects of it one will never grasp as the stories vary from person to person and there are differences in how it’s viewed by others based on gender, race and sexuality.

There’s a saying that I can relate to. It says how one was so down that they had to reach up to touch the bottom. I think for me I was at a point when I was tired of touching the bottom of my life and wanted to reclaim my full potential. The way to do that was to first get out of the passive role and get assertive with my dealings in life. I had to stop looking at myself as a victim and get back behind the wheels of my destiny. I had to do something revolutionary. I had to learn how to love myself despite my health situation.

In this place of reconstruction I had to tear away from the people who didn’t have my best interest in mind. I had to stop focusing on who didn’t love me and bring forward in my life those who did love me. My construction of self-meant tearing down the wall I had placed around my heart. I also had to destroy bridges that led me to negative behaviors and make new bridges that placed me on a road to my purpose.

I learned to say the word no. I repeat I learned to say the word ’no’ especially if I found no benefit in my life and teaching myself to say yes to opportunities that I may have thought I wasn’t ready for. I stopped feeling guilty about placing myself first and although there is no cure, staying healthy not for any other but my own benefit.

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