Monday Reflection: Living In Your Life!

October 7, 2013 By Rae Lewis-Thornton

Have you ever stopped to think about how you are living your life? No, I'm not talking about being alive, I'm talking about living. Being alive and living are two different things. Life is a gift, but living is a challenge.

We are all faced with the challenge of living every single day. Some of us have a harder challenge than others. It seems to me that my challenges overall have been enough for two people. I struggle with the challenge of living everyday.

Like yesterday morning when I woke up. I thought about this one thing, about living; No, not being alive, but living. My health has been more than a challenge to say the least these last three months. I think I'm literally on, shit-no shit overload.

So yesterday morning I was feeling particularly bad, and my impulse was to give into what I was feeling. When I say feeling bad, this is what I was feeling, my back, lower abdominal and side is in some kind of constant pain, I'm nauseated all the time and I'm bloated beyond understanding because I'm not using the bathroom. What do I mean by bloated? Well, if I eat one egg it feels like I have eaten five. So yesterday morning that is what I was feeling. Now I knew I needed to eat so that I could take my morning medication and head to church, but I had/have no appetite and just the thought of eating makes me even more nauseated.

So, when I woke up, I was actually aware that I was alive. I mean my body was screaming bloody murder, how could I not know? But then I was faced with how I was going to live in the life that was sitting in front of me. For the past three months I've been passing up church on Sunday morning for the comfort of my bed and the New York Times. When you are hurting physically it's easy to surrender into that pain, but yesterday there was something inside of me that wanted more for myself at that moment. So I made my way out of that bed and starting pulling myself together for church.

Now for sure, I almost quit in the process. Every move was an effort from make-up to hair to my Spanx, but I kept right on moving. When I made it to church, already in full force, I was overwhelmed with emotion. Not just because I am alive having lived with HIV for 30 years and AIDS for 21, but because, I've not given my life over to this horrible disease. Now for sure, some days I do nothing. Right, I listen to my body and understand my limits. But don't you know that doing nothing is also living. Everything you do is living. From sitting still to doing jumping jacks. For me it's about living well from, what I put in my mouth to what I keep out of my month.

Yesterday, I was struggling to get to church, but something inside of me said that I needed to be there and I was right on point. I needed the hugs and laughs that I received after church. I needed Pastor Jakes sermon, “Don’t Stress.” All that I received yesterday was what I needed to jump start this new week in spite of the health challenges. The thing about living is choosing to live well. Self-Care and Self-Love of course being at the top of the list. I’m on a mission to get these twins Care and Love right for me. I’m grateful for the gift of life, but there is a special gratitude I have for the ability to live in my life. What I know for sure, life is a gift and living is what you do with that gift. Living is putting the gift of life into action. What are you doing with your gift of life?

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