Operate In Your Blessing...

September 5, 2013 By Rae Lewis-Thornton

As I was putting on my make up yesterday, getting myself ready for church, I started to think about the fact that I never gave up. I mean think about that thing. I've known my HIV status for 26 of the 29 years I've been infected.

I’ve had to manage what has at times seemed unmanageable. For sure, when I was told my HIV status, it was a death sentence; bottom line! And make no mistakes, I saw death staring me in my face. Finding hope sometimes seemed impossible with a T-Cell count of 8 at one point and mediocre healthcare at best. The medical community was working hard, but that first half of the pandemic was a living nightmare. It just wasn’t what it is today.

Think about this, I’ve had to think about this thing for over half of my life. Just thinking about HIV is overwhelming. What I could have done differently. What people think of me. Will anyone love or date me? When am I going to get sick next? How am I going to get sick; will it be an infection that’s treatable or something that will take me out of here? Just thinking about death when I should have been thinking about living was a chore in and of itself.

Thinking about this thing was some hard and real shit. How HIV changed my life, how my goals changed, shit just straight up, how HIV/AIDS reshaped my life and my body without my fucking permission.

I mean, it’s a wonder that thinking about HIV these last 26 years of knowing, I didn’t lose my freaking mind. I understand now when the old folks use to say in church, “I thank God for waking me up in my right mind.” I am never going to take my right mind for granted, because Living with HIV/AIDS is some dark shit, For real… For real….

Yes, there were days when I lamented to God, ummm Ima be honest, I just flat out cursed God. Yes, there were days when I straight went there, but whenever I began to have my own personal pity party, I would think about my history with God. **See, no matter how bad it is on today, I think about how God kept me on yesterday and thinking about yesterday, gives me hope for tomorrow.**

I got an email from a woman recently who has just been diagnosed with HIV and there are days when she has no hope. Days when all she can think about is how freaking dark this disease is and that has left her hopeless and suicidal. But if you think on the goodness for just five minutes, it will give you five minutes of hope. Try it people, in your despair, think about what God has already done in your life. Let the victories of yesterday give you hope for tomorrow. Operate in your blessings, not in your despair.

Let me pause to say, it's crazy in the 21st century, 32 years into the AIDS pandemic a newly diagnosed person is filled with such hopelessness because of the attitudes around HIV. HIV/AIDS

is the one medical condition that leaves a person with shame of self because of the shaming from others. It's bad enough having to deal with a long term chronic illness, but to have to deal with all the gossip and nasty opinions that come with this disease is enough to make you go mad.

I'm so glad, that I don't give a fuck what people think of me anymore. God set me free from that madness. I don't even care that you just grasped at the fact that I just used fuck and God in the same sentence. Your small mind don't interfere with how God gives me an aha moment to give to others, nor does it change my methodology. It's my gift and I'm not going to stop operating in my gifts because you box God's capacity to use people into your small mind.

That was a side bar, but back to the point. Living with this disease is madness at its best. For sure, God has given me the ability to operate in madness with a sane mind.

Me and Lesa having Tea at the Peninsula

Yes, God has been a keeper, but God keeps people all day long that still live in hopelessness. Yep,

Grandmama use to say, God takes care of fools and babies. Not only that, some people just complain and cry all day long about shit they can control. You keep talking about how you hate your job, but you ain't even tried to look for a new job or a new career.

I don't want to hear your excuses! Shit stinks no matter where it comes from. I know you can make it happen, if you operate in your blessings. My girlfriend Lesa is interviewing for medical school, with Lupus. She's over 35 years of age and she just lost her mother. SO STOP IT! Stop sitting back waiting on God to change things when God has given you all that you need to change things. You are just too busy complaining and or boxing God into the terms and conditions you want instead of operating in the blessing that is before you.

We do it in relationships too. You don't like how that man makes you feel, how he treats you, but you stay. You stay and take the 50% because that's better than being alone. Bullshit ain't nothing, I'm never going to stay in a relationship with a man that doesn't understand my value, and doesn't treat me at my optimum worth. God didn't give me value for another person to depreciate my worth. Yep, people will treat you however you allow them to. Some of you are praying for God to make him do right, when you need to pray for the strength to pack your freaking bags. Some things you are waiting on God to change, when you have the power to change yourself. That's what so great about free will. You can choose. Freewill is a blessing!

Tracyce Madre before and after.

You don't like all that extra weight, but you don't push yourself from the table. You have one more cookie because you like how the cookie makes you feel and you explain it to yourself by saying you had a rough day. You don't work out and you explain that away by saying you're too tired or

too busy. Yep, you give the madness a place to live and thrive in your spirit, me included. I've been complaining about these extra 20 pounds I got last year from being sick on IV most of the year and a year later I'm still complaining *smh* but ummm, I just got my breakthrough POW! My hair weaver/stylist Trayce Madre' lost over 90 pounds; one meal and one work out at a time. God gives us the tools, but we don't use them.

For sure, living with HIV/AIDS has become a permanent fixture in my life. I can't change that fact, but I can determine how I operate in this madness.

Yes, I could have surrendered to the madness of AIDS a long time ago, but I chose life over death; and I live in the blessing of my life no matter what I'm facing. You can't let the disappointment, the ugly and the challenges of life stop you.

You must make the best out of what's before you. You have got to operate in the blessings of right now.

If you can't quite see your right now, I'll lend you some of my right now. Think about the fact that I not only want to put on make-up, I do. Think about the fact that I keep it moving no matter how slow the pace. Find hope in someone else, until you can find hope in your own story.

But find hope in your own story you must! Try this, write down one blessing a day and use that as a tool for remembrance when things are so dark you can’t see in front of you. Pull that piece of paper out and use it as a roadmap for your future.

At the end of the day you have got to ask yourself, what are you doing with what God has given you? Are you squandering your gift of life? Are you allowing the madness to dictate to you, rather than you to it?

God can keep you all day long, but God needs you to operate in the blessings that He has given to you. This is your optimum! And the moment you start operating in your blessings, you will move in the direction of the life that God has designed just for you. Operate in Your Blessing!

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