Writing My HIV

July 24, 2016 By Aundaray Guess

When asked why I write about my HIV and the journey it has created for me, I respond in the following.

I tell them, I write about my HIV because back then it felt I was no longer in control of my life, so my words empowered me. They allowed me to create the life I felt was denied me. A way to draw a map of my journey as I emerge from the storm.

I write about my HIV as an alternative to writing my obituary. Refusing to see this as a death sentence, an erase of my accomplishments. My penmanship creates characters that fills in the dash between the date I was born and the day I will leave this earth.

I write about my HIV to release the anger I felt to others and mostly myself. I know the consequences of walking with anger in this world and know there are not enough walls I can put my fist through. My words calm my anger and contains its rage. The structure of my words temper my emotions and give allowance to the fury born from my HIV status.

I write of my HIV so that the person who gave it to me know I continue to live and his 'gift' didn't destroy me. I craft words to the man who doesn't even realize he gave me this gift. And in my prose he will see how the one night of unattached sex, attached us together for life. And in my words I can find the letters which forms his names, as I forgot to ask it before opening myself to him.

I write of my HIV to rebuild the families I once had. Knowing that with the announcement of my status, those who were considered my family, by blood and chance, took the opportunity to create a void in my life. As they couldn't give me the love they shared on other occasions, instead running away from my pain. I penned my words to build a new support system, those who embrace my circumstances and fill my life with light, driving out the darkness.

I write of my HIV to keep going. After thirty years of this disease, festering inside me, my words keep my life in motion. Each phrase, paragraph and sentence makes sure I don't live my life as a sentence. A journal to look back at what I overcame when I didn't think I could. A reminder of what I used to be and have emerged from. My words fill in the outline of what was once an empty page. Letting me now I am more than this disease.

I write about my HIV to inspire myself and others. Knowing that after my announcement, people returned to their HIV negative lives and I live my life with HIV, alone. I thread my writes to create a

blanket of support and toss it into the world so others don’t feel alone. Hoping that despite the incorrect grammar and broken sentences they find purpose and a community which empowers them.

I write about my HIV to help others and even myself to not forget about HIV. A recap of all the pain, stigma and rejection that is still attached to this disease. To design words to remind people that the disease is still here and although we celebrate the lessening of deaths from it; the disease is still here. To let people, know HIV has a history and for those yet to be infected, awareness that HIV is still here.

HIV is still here.

HIV is still here.

And until it has left my body or this world, I will still write about it.

Every day.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.