Another Year, Another Birthday, Another Review of Life Thus Far

I feel like 500 years were added to my age when I got on the cancer train. I do have moments of joy, but they're fleeting.

July 7, 2022 By Megan-Claire Chase

There was a time when I would tell the world my birthday was on July 3rd and celebrate it with all the joy, tiaras, and zest I possess.

Then adulting happened.

Then shattered hearts happened.

Then the recession of 2008 happened.

Then more breakups happened.

Then weight gain happened.

Then officially diagnosed with depression and anxiety happened.

Then jobs not paying me my worth happened.

Then breast cancer happened.

Then financial toxicity happened.

Then experiencing racism in the cancer space happened.

Then began the grief cycle of losing my fertility happened.

Then surgical menopause happened.

Then permanent damage from toxic cancer treatments happened.

Then chronic pain happened.

Then multiple falls happened.

Then the fear of living alone happened.

Then the loss of career happened again.

Then belief in my worth professionally happened.

Then the pandemic happened.

Then started believing in my many talents happened.

Then a change in career trajectory happened.

Then learned how insidious oppression has happened.

Then became known as an advocate, writer, and speaker happened.

Then more and more friends in cancerland dying from cancer happened.

Then faced microaggressions that turned into full-on aggression happened.

Then a complete mental breakdown happened.

Then changed jobs again happened.

Then more weight gain happened.

Then even more fear of existing in the USA happened.

Then amazing friendships developed that aren't local happened.

Then continued to be plagued by loneliness happened.

Then more years in the "survivorship stage" happened.

Then beginning to do more creative things happened.

Then glimmers of hope happened.

Then glimmers of hope dashed happened.

Then soul was on the verge of completely shattering happened.

Then another birthday happened.

I turned 46 years old July 3rd, but I like to say 546 years old. I had felt 500 years added to my age from when I landed on the cancer train at 39 and felt continuously much older than my physical appearance. Chronic pain, depression, anxiety, rage in this country, and loneliness wear me down.

I do have moments of joy, but they're fleeting. I long for the day when those moments become long-term. The reality is that may never happen.

People from all races constantly tell me to keep using my voice without fully recognizing the emotional and physical toll it takes to keep speaking up and out about racism in and outside cancerland. I am an only child; my besties do not live nearby, and no human children or a relationship with anyone. The loneliness and fear are palpable more times than not.

I had posted on social media how being perceived as strong and often having no choice but to be strong is detrimental to my mental health. A white woman commented that I should probably change my social media handle if that's the case. I shouldn't be surprised by comments like this but it still made me shake my head. I know there is constant dispute over using battle terms in the cancer space. To me, essentially branding myself as Warrior Megsie was fitting because I don't get a break from my cancer reality or the reality of being Black this country and how it affects everything from career, health, and relationships. There are no breaks from injustice, racism, and oppression in the Black community. There comes a point where the inherent strength many of us possess can't continue warding off attacks to our very existence without cracking from the toll of it. I will always see myself as Warrior Megsie because my entrance (birth) into this universe was life-threatening, challenging, and foreshadowed the difficulties I would face as a Black little girl through adulthood.

So, as my cutie therapist tells me weekly, I will do my best to find some sparks of joy daily and be comforted in knowing I have created a digital legacy that is pretty damn special. I have the capacity for great darkness and great joy. Lately, the darkness is gripping my soul, but my bright light still peaks through. Even though I am heavily contemplating no longer writing new posts but keeping the site available for people to read past posts, I am proud of the vulnerability, rawness, humor, reality, and the full range of emotions displayed in every word.

Until next time (if there IS a next time),

Warrior Megsie

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