ANXIETY GURRL — Link Between Childhood Trauma & Illness?

April 18, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

So the last post got me thinking about the link (if it exists) between childhood trauma and illness. I do NOT blame myself for getting sick — never have and never will. I know there is nothing I could have done differently or can do differently to have changed the fact that I got diagnosed with cancer at 39 years old.

All I can do is move forward with the confidence, the belief that I am "cured" — there is no other way to live or as I put it in my insta stories (why aren't you following me yet?):

My MO is to understand
that the Worst could
happen but not to believe
it will happen to me
because that's the only
way I know how to live
#lisawisdom
#thursdaythoughts

I hate to blame parents for anything — I know there are some shite parents out there but really, I was not neglected or beaten or abused. I did however understand too much at too young of an age and really did believe it was my "job" to fix things — I wrote a little about my childhood here but the fact is that I was an adult in a little kid's body from about 9 years old. I took responsibility for my brothers and also tried to help my parent's marriage and more. I did not cook or clean, but everything else was on my shoulders.

When I think back of it, now having kids around that age who are going through something as traumatic in a way as I did watching my parents' marriage crumble and moving around so much and not having a pot to piss in and blah blah blah — I realize that though things happened that were really bad, I did not keep the bad with me. As much as you can blame my future anxiety, cancer diagnosis, my old need for control, etc., on my childhood, I refute it, I reject it.

Through the worst of times, during my childhood and young adulthood, I worried but I knew it would all work out. Or I deluded myself into thinking that. At times when things were darkest — when my grandparents who lived with us and cared for us after my mom left the family — seemed to be ready to give up because of issues with my dad — I still believed it would work out.

When my mom would call me crying because she did not have us with her but at the same time made no move to offer a safe environment, I still believed it would work out.

I wrote everything down, I spoke to a therapist until he tried to do something weird in my book — nothing illegal just WEIRD and then I kept my nose down and kept working, working, working, studying, helping my brothers, calming down the fights, listening to my dad rail about how my mom was a whore, listening to my mom crying about how lonely she was until she met someone new and then all was great…

So when I see my kids struggle at times with my illness and its aftermath, I think back about how I handled things when my world fell apart, multiple times. I just kept going and going and going and kept believing it would all be okay. I let the tragedies, the issues, the pity, the haters flow off my back like a duck with water off its back.

I rolled with things. I had my normalcy, my childhood sweetheart (who I did not marry) and their family who helped provide some stability and before I knew it, I was living in Italy getting my MBA and away from the chaos only to be hit with much, much worse when I came back and lost my grandma who held us all together. But still, I survived and I think about HOW — how did I do it and what can I push down to my kids to help them push through, too and you know avoid the cancer shit. So taking the good pieces and not the "delusion" or the "Type A" stuff…

I guess it would be called "resilience" or "internal fortitude" — the fact that I kept pushing and trying no matter how many times I failed (and continue to fail), witnessed failing and been failed is I guess because I am deep down to my core as positive as possible — maybe insanely so.

After 2 miscarriages, I got my son here by hook or by crook. After stage 3 cancer, I learned how to live. Unfortunately or fortunately so much of how I live and why I live has had to change. I already shared how I need to stop thinking in terms of my children and think about ME because otherwise, I will fall apart. I know that there are things they need that I can no longer provide them 100 percent — the safety, the stability — it is gone. I need them to find it deep down inside themselves as I did in 1986… and again, God willing, without the cancer.

This is what I do in the time between…

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