A Cancer Triple Threat

I have neuropathy, fibromyalgia and chemo brain happening at once. I knew I was talented, but this takes it to a whole new level.

July 28, 2019 By Megan-Claire Chase

For those in the theatre world, you know what that term means. For those not in the theatre world, 'triple threat' means you can sing, dance and act. Well, in terms of the cancer world, it means I have neuropathy, fibromyalgia and chemo brain happening at once. I knew I was talented, but this takes it to a whole new level.

I start off each morning with a painful and groaning performance before I even get out of bed. It's usually been a fitful night of sleep tossing and turning trying to find a comfortable position due to painsomnia. That's when I access my pain level for the start of my day. I do some stretching to get some circulation flowing, especially my ankles. I have no feeling from the upper balls of my feet through my toes. Zero, nada, nothing. It's been that way since my very first Taxol chemo treatment. I didn't know neuropathy could be this severe and happen so suddenly with that first treatment. The permanent damage was done. No acupuncture will help.

Then I move my fingers and warm them up. I have neuropathy in them, too. The nerves are still regenerating in them because I feel tingling and many times stabbing pain like little needles in them, especially when I'm typing, like now. From there I move my head side to side and then stretch my legs.

Now I'm ready for my walk across the stage, aka the bathroom. I always have my cane next to my bed. I wake up with the fibromyalgia pain and osteoarthritis in my knees every day. Lately my hips have been in immense pain. We all know the hips don't lie.

The groaning turns into a full on one- minute monologue of expletives as I make my way across the stage, hunched over like the Elephant man and holding onto my cane for dear life. Sometimes my fibromyalgia chronic pain is all over my body. It can often feel burning, especially my lower back, legs and arms. Then, of course, the extremely tender points on my neck and shoulders. It can move into my hands as well. That's the thing about fibromyalgia, it can move, so I never know what to expect each day. The one major chronic pain area that I never, ever feel a smidgen of relief is my lower left back since that blasted hysterectomy/oophorectomy in 2017.

I'm fully awake now and ready for the pièce de résistance. I walk across the stage, aka the living room to the kitchen, with my usual straight posture from years of ballet and musical theatre but slow and short steps because my balance is still off. I see my many post-it notes, notepads and

planner filled with lists and reminders of things I need to do, to buy and to respond to. If I have something super important that I must remember to do that day, I always put a post-it note on my front door above the locks, so I'll see it.

I'm already exhausted and haven't even driven to work yet. That's my life in the spotlight of being a cancer triple threat.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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