

When You're Not Considered Essential

If the corporate world and medical world don't think I'm essential, then how should I classify myself?

May 8, 2020 By [Megan-Claire Chase](#)

I've been struggling with the term "essential" for the past few weeks. I have a visceral reaction each time I hear it on the news or read it on social media. In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, I was deemed unessential by my former employer and unessential by my medical team. I didn't realize how much I want to be classified as an "essential" person.

As I wrote in my previous blog post, I was laid off on April 3rd, and it was a shock. I never once thought I was in danger of losing my job and had considered my skills and talent essential. The coldness and dismissive way I was laid off has done a number on my psyche.

Since I'm not on any post-treatment medications for my breast cancer, my oncologist said I only need to see him in-person once a year. My body is intolerant of ALL post-treatment medications at this time. I was told I fall into a category of women whose body just cannot tolerate anything currently on the market. My breast cancer surgeon wants to see me every six months for scans. Once again, I feel like a little pink fish tossed out into sea in the middle of swarming great white sharks. How long will I float before I get bitten with metastatic cancer?

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I look at my spreadsheet that lists all my medical bills (yes; I keep a spreadsheet) and think they have no trouble taking my money and calling me during a pandemic asking for payment. I guess my money or lack thereof is essential but not my body.

I fully admit my depression and anxiety is swinging like a monkey at a jungle gym. I have way too many unknowns happening in my life. I can handle one but not multiple. Trying to stay motivated and some days are tougher than others. If I'm not considered essential, then what is my purpose?

Well, when I get too stuck in my head, I need to DO something to give the illusion that I'm essential. So, I went grocery shopping with my mother (she paid since I'm unemployed) and bought food to deliver to St. Andrew Catholic Church so they can give it to St. Vincent de Paul's food bank, and delivered food to a the women's shelter The Drake House. I felt this surge of energy and felt essential in doing something kind. I can't bare to think of people and children

going hungry at any time but especially during an economic shutdown.

Then I felt essential again yesterday as I led a 15-minute session about writing to feel and heal at the GRYT Cancer and Mental Health Summit online. I had so much fun preparing for it all week and then to talk about my struggles and how writing helps gauge my mental health was hugely cathartic. If what I said resonated with at least two people, then mission accomplished.

I have no idea what this week will bring. Here's what's running through my head right now.

Will I get a job interview?

Will my true purpose be revealed to me?

Will I get a job doing what I genuinely love that doesn't deplete my soul?

Will my unemployment funds miraculously show up in my back account since I can't get a human on the phone at the department of labor?

Hopefully, I can find something to do that will make me feel essential this week and keep the thick veil of depression and anxiety from suffocating me.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

This post originally appeared on [Life on the Cancer Train](http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/considered-essential) on April 26, 2020. It is republished with permission.