# Good Mourning

Those were the good old days, when you got a party invitation and didn't have to check the calendar to see if it was a treatment week.

October 11, 2018 By Allison Ruddick

---

It could be something as little as not being able to fully bend down to pick up a sock on the floor that sets it off. You start to think, "When did this become difficult?"

That one little action inevitably snowballs into a complete breakdown. You realize that it's been literally years since you've had a day where you weren't in some sort of pain. Back when your significant other didn't instinctively reach out to help you up from the couch because your core muscles have been destroyed by surgeries. When you could lift more than 15 pounds without worrying about a hernia. When you didn't have to hope that someone on the packed subway would give you their seat when you're struggling to hold up your own weight. When you didn't have to take breaks on the stairway and usher people by you so they didn't get angry. When you could carry the cute little clutch instead of a ginormous tote bag stocked with medical supplies every time you left the house. When you could wear a bathing suit without worrying about covering up the unnatural lines and marks that now traverse your skin. When a headache was just a headache, and didn't immediately strike fear of metastasis (and when you didn't even know the word 'metastasis').

Indeed, those were the good old days when you got a party invitation in the mail and didn't have to check the calendar to see if it was a treatment week. When you could make plans for your future that stretched past your three-month scan mark. When you could dream about what your kids would look like and wonder if they'd have your eyes. Hell, back then you even stuck a pillow under your shirt to see what you'd look like pregnant. When your fear of being judged in social situations was based more on your choice of outfit instead of your disability. When there was no need to hesitate to book a hairstylist for your wedding because you weren't sure if you'd even have hair. When you didn't worry that the vows you were writing were going to have an expiration date. When you saved money for retirement without thinking that you may not survive long enough to need it. When you made plans to move based on a new job or exciting locale instead of the close proximity of family members that will be able to drive you to treatment.

No matter how well you accept the hand that's been dealt to you and learn to live with it, there are still times when it hits you like a ton of bricks. I've found that it's actually good to have those moments where the gravity of your situation overwhelms you. It's ok to respond to a "stay positive" comment by explaining that there are just times when you have to allow yourself to feel

the sadness and anger that accompanies cancer. The fact of the matter is that there will always be this underlying sense of mourning for the life that you used to have, for the plans you used to make, for the blissful naïveté that existed before you heard the words, “It’s cancer.”

Then, when your puffy red eyes start to dry, pick up the damn sock, throw it in the hamper and make plans for tomorrow. Because, for today, you still have a tomorrow and there’s no use in wasting it by dwelling on the things that you cannot change.

This post originally appeared on Keeping Cancer Classy on October 11, 2018. It is republished with permission.

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/good-mourning