Layered Loneliness

Are there any single and childless cancer survivors who are also only children?

June 24, 2020 By Megan-Claire Chase

I think back to the start of my breast cancer experience five years ago. The struggle to just survive the toxic treatments, multiple surgeries, blood transfusions, and complications post-treatment makes me wonder why am I still here? I was initially filled with such hope once I was officially declared as no evidence of disease—I refuse to say cancer free.

I am now infertile and in medically induced menopause well before my time.

I have fibromyalgia.

I have neuropathy in my hands and feet.

I have a bulging disc and slight tear near the nerve in my back.

And I discovered in January I have two benign lesions on my spine that need to be monitored.

I get so angry when I hear the following comments:

- “Just be grateful you’re alive.”
- “Cancer doesn’t define you.”
- “Be happy you’re single.”

As I listened to various cancer conferences this month, the bulk of the female presenters often begin their talks with how they fought cancer to be there for their kids. Do they ever think about how crushing that is to hear as a single cancer survivor? I don’t mean anyone who divorced during or after treatment. I’m talking about the survivors like me who were single at the start of diagnosis and still single post-cancer.

When I think about it, I honestly didn’t have much motivation to “fight” to survive my cancer treatments. The main reason I did was for my beloved mother and cat Nathan (Natey) Edgar. That’s it.

I am single.

I often feel very alone.

I’m an only child.

My life post-cancer still feels quite isolating.

I don’t have many local friends. I know a lot of people locally, and have many acquaintances, but there is only one who I talk to weekly and would hang out with once a month before the pandemic. The bulk of my friends are out of state and in other counties. Many of them are married with children, or they have a significant other. I don’t really know many single and childless people – male or female.

I always hear that I should just get out there and date. Any guy would be lucky to have me. Well, I would say that would be a true statement, but my color makes dating tough. That’s a whole other story for another day. Now that I am in menopause and in chronic pain 24/7 makes dating feel impossible. The only time my dating life was pretty active, and fun was when I lived in LA in my early to mid-20’s.

I’ve tried so many different medications, surgeries, and supplements to help ease the pain, but nothing has fully worked effectively. What people don’t understand about fibromyalgia is being touched can cause horrific pain. It makes sleep difficult. It makes exercising difficult. It makes simply existing difficult. Then add permanent neuropathy in my feet makes walking difficult.

When I did try dating a little a year post-cancer, I remember one guy asked why I was walking so stiffly. I thought I could hide how painful it can be to even step onto a sidewalk or go up steps. I didn’t bother saying it’s due to cancer. Instead, I said I was sore from working out earlier that day.

How can I even think of dating when I literally cannot hide the physical pain?

Are there any single and childless cancer survivors who are also only children? It’s like lonely, on top lonely, on top of lonely. This is the one time being the only one isn’t an advantage.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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