The Menopause

You can't go back to the life you had before cancer. You're not the same person.

October 18, 2018 By Amanda Hayes

Let's celebrate!

Did you know today is World Menopause Day? They literally make a day for everything. I know these days are a day of awareness. For those who are going through these conditions, it's a day where those who aren't experiencing them can stop and listen. It's a day where you can take a health audit of your current status. People who aren't in the know get educated. Charities and societies can create events and raise funds to help current and future people in need.

I know it's a good thing.

However, I can't help looking at it as a big banner that my body is a failure. I know it's a little self-absorbed to be thinking of yourself but for crying out loud, there seems to be one day after another after another that seems to correspond to my status in life. Can I not go back to being normal, oblivious to these titled days?

Failure

I've never really looked at myself as a failure until cancer. A couple of months ago I had to write a few sentences on how cancer has made me feel like a failure for Marie Curie. I don't know if they actually used what I wrote, I never heard much from it. Failure is a strong word but that's what's happened, my body failed.

When I told my family what I had to do they were horrified to hear that I had been asked. I guess I just take it all in my stride. I didn't think much of it, so I had to sit and think for a bit on what to write… it's not something I really thought much of before. Now, apparently, it is all I can think of.

I'm definitely struggling more this side of the diagnosis than ever before. Being diagnosed and having treatment seems to be the easy bit… but is that because my mind is protecting me from what I've been through? It's so much easier looking back on things. It never seems so bad but it was, it was awful.

The Silence

For nearly two years I've been dictated on where to go and what appointment to attend. As soon as treatment is over though you're dropped.

There's silence.

Silence is great for the recovery period where you're managing to get up and out. But as time passes you realise it can't carry on. You need to pick your life back up. The trouble is, what life? You can't go back to the one you had before, you're not the same person. There are all these new insecurities and anxieties that were never there before.

Premature Ovarian Failure

Menopause is a funny one really. It's not one I really know a lot about. I mean, I know the physicality of it and I've read all there is to know about it until I'm blue in the face but my experience of it is pretty dull. Radiotherapy and chemotherapy caused premature ovarian failure, in other words, put me into an early menopause. I experienced a few hot flushes when my treatment ended before I got an appointment for the early menopause clinic but that's about it.

Taking HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), replace the ones that I no longer produce artificially. Because I take this, it means any symptoms of the menopause are gone. I take this for the rest of my life or until I'm of normal menopausal age… I guess that will be for the next 25 years. Then I get to experience the true side of the menopause, I imagine.

I'm supposed to monitor my general feelings of well-being and if I feel something is not normal or is out of sync then I can call the clinic and alter the dosage. What is normal though?

My normal may be different from your normal. I don't think I know or have a normal anymore.

New Normal

I hear quite frequently that after cancer you have a "new normal". It's a normal that is different from your old one and different to those around you. I hate that phrase. Nothing is normal about this and finding that "normal" seems near impossible.

On the upside, I've had my appointment through for my next CT scan. I'll be glad to get that one done. My previous three-month check-up was only an X-ray, so at least having a more in-depth scan will calm the mind some. It'll be the first since I had my N.E.D (No evidence of disease) back in May.

Keeping Busy

The Beauty Bus is brilliant at keeping the mind busy. If I'm not careful I can find myself in a silent world where my mind is screaming at me about all the things that are wrong. I try not to focus too much on these details but some days are harder than others.

The funding for the Bus is coming along amazingly. Thank you to those who have donated, shared and spread the word about my cause. I'm incredibly lucky to have an amazing support team around me who believe in my idea.

Donations are still open so if you would like to donate or share then you can do so here.

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