Must Shatter to Discover the Woman I Need to Be

There is a glimmer of hope shining in the distance. It's not totally bleak.

May 10, 2019 By Megan-Claire Chase

I was in my Unspoken Ink writing class last night with my Lacuna Loft warriors. Below was one of the prompts, which ties perfectly into what I am experiencing right now.

{We are all broken, that's how the light gets in} Ernest Hemingway

Broken is too benign a term. I'm currently shattered. I've been giving away too much of light without much in return. I was no longer running on empty or even fumes. I officially stopped running last week.

You know that saying, "Growth and change comes from discomfort. You have to be comfortable being uncomfortable if you want to be extraordinary." Well, that's my current stage.

I grow tired of being told I'm so strong. I've had to be strong my whole life. I've always been an outsider and never really fit in anywhere except when on stage. There's nothing better than being in the spotlight whether it's actually performing or giving a speech.

That's where my true light within starts to shine.

I've literally been a swag MEG trying to fit into a round hole. I didn't take the risks I should've taken after college.

Then I get cancer. I pushed through it with humor, but deep down, I was losing myself. How do I grapple with almost dying?

Jump ahead three years later, I've been slammed with hit after hit of infections, chemo induced neuropathy, chemo induced fibromyalgia, shingles, severe dehydration, vertigo and now pneumonia. Getting pneumonia was the last straw. I knew I had to make some serious changes, or I would die.

I had to allow myself to completely shatter. I must understand the woman I am now.

I'm chronically single.

I’m childless.

I’m in chronic pain.

I’m grieving.

I’m angry.

I’m depressed.

I’m traumatized.

Somehow, through all this, the winds of resilience keep pushing me forward. There is a glimmer of hope shining in the distance. It’s not totally bleak.

I took a major step that I’ve been scared and uncomfortable to do for some time. I told my boss that I needed to take a two-month leave of absence to work on my health. I still shake thinking about that call on Monday. It was difficult to ask for what I need but had to be done.

I’ve never shattered in such a visceral way on so many levels at once. This is new to me. It’s painful and ugly. I do believe it’s the chronic pain that shoved me over the edge.

I often get asked how I feel. Those who have been through cancer get asked this question a lot and struggle with how honest we should be when answering. I want to scream to stop asking me how I’m feeling! Then I feel like a bitch for snapping.

Don’t people see there is no real relief from chronic pain? The level of it might be less than even the hour before, more tolerable, but IT NEVER LEAVES. I’m literally in pain every blasted day. It wears on me, especially since I am single. I don’t have a husband, boyfriend or kids to help clean, cook or even bring me a glass of water because I’m finally in a good position and know moving will hurt like hell.

That’s my “new not so normal,” and it sucks. I beat cancer and this is how my body decides to react? I’m NOT thriving. If anything, being naturally me, who is always a tad extra, wears me out.

I still get that “survivor envy” of others who seem to be physically excelling where I literally can’t. The CBD oil with THC only helps manage the pain but doesn’t completely take it away. I want to run marathons, relays, climb mountains, etc. I want to feel physically strong again.

I miss my 34-year-old body. That’s the last time I felt strong and was fit. I push through my pain every blasted day just by getting out of the bed and into the shower. As someone who used to perform musical theatre, ballet, salsa and swing dance, I need to get movement back into my life.

Then I remember the severe neuropathy especially in my feet. No amount of acupuncture or supplements or meds will help. The damage is permanent. How can I be dancer without feeling my feet?

So, I've shattered and discovering ways to put my pieces back together. I plan on going to some local survivorship programs to work on coping with the permanent damage caused by my cancer treatments. I also need to feed my creative soul again. I refuse to die on a bed of regrets when I have all this talent that sits behind a desk day-after-day.

I'm meant to be on stage. I am determined to figure out how to make this happen. After all, I'm not dead yet. It's time to stop acting like I'm dead, and somehow claw my way back into the land of the living.

So, I've allowed the winds of resilience to fully take hold and push me forward. Time to heal my body and get to know it so I can start pursuing what I was always too scared to do.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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