The One Cancer Side Effect I Love

Though I continue to struggle with accepting this post-cancer body, I feel more confident to be unapologetically ME.

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Going through cancer is like being on a never-ending rollercoaster in the dark. You never know what drop or curve is coming next. I've often written and spoken about how devastating the physical changes are and how destructive the mental changes are. Yet, I realized something a few days ago that is a surprisingly positive side effect – my attitude changed.

There isn't a day that goes by without missing my pre-cancer body. Every morning I wake up, I immediately curse it because I can no longer count on it to be healthy or strong.

Painsomnia is my nightly companion.

My cortisol belly and non-estrogen-producing body horrify me by their immense size.

The physical strength I used to possess is gone.

Nails break, eyebrows are filled in with brow gel on the daily, and lashes are no longer thick.

Fibromyalgia and chemo-induced peripheral neuropathy are the exes who won't leave me alone.

Lower back pain did temporarily go away after two facet injections last year but now I need a third one.

This body of mine continues to bankrupt me financially and mentally. There is so much out of my control, except my assertive mind. I will no longer tolerate bullshit or being disrespected – personally or professionally. I've mentioned this before but there's a difference now. I've been actively living in my truth and values (yay therapy).

I've dealt with racism and microaggressions my entire life and career but never had the confidence to truly do something about it. The first time I actually said, "I will not be the Black token" and "I do not feel safe" was 15 months ago at my previous employment. I was so scared, that my voice shook, but I knew I had to stand up for myself. I was drowning mentally and emotionally but something shifted in my spirit the first time I said those words.

I believed in my talent and expertise so much that I just knew I would land on my feet. Did it hurt

me financially to leave a job back then without a backup plan? Yes, it did, but I spoke MY truth. Now that I've done it once I can't go back to being silent.

Existing in this country and in this skin has cracked my soul in ways I can't fully verbalize. While it's exhausting, I am becoming careful about protecting access to my energy. Who knew maintaining healthy boundaries would be difficult yet freeing at the same time?!

Though I continue to struggle with accepting this post-cancer body both externally and internally, I feel more confident to be unapologetically ME and stand up for myself in situations where no one else has the courage to do so.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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