Toggling Between Grief, Depression and Happiness

Lately, I've been toggling between being in a very dark place and remaining in the moment.

January 2, 2022 By Megan-Claire Chase

There have been many reasons to feel excited, happy, and like I'm truly using my talent the past few weeks.

· Began acting classes at the Alliance Theatre and faced my fear of chemo brain affecting my ability to memorize lines again.

· My latest blog piece on WebMD was featured on their main page for 1 ½ days earlier this week.

· I was in a fashion show for Macy's in Buford, GA with some other cancer survivors/patients.

· Met up with a cancer friend from the Elephants and Tea community who was in town this week.

So why am I still struggling to keep the darkness at bay?

I've had suicidal thoughts in the past. I've battled depression since high school. I acknowledge there is scary darkness within and work hard to push those thoughts away. So far, my sheer will, and stubbornness have kept me from stepping off the ledge. I'm a huge proponent of therapy. I've been in therapy off and on for years. My current therapist has helped me push through some fear, shame, and insecurities that have been holding me back, so why do I still feel these breakthroughs and accomplishments are fleeting?

I think grief + depression isn't talked about enough. There are so many layers of both. One minute you think you're handling things pretty well and even feel some joy and like a weight has been lifted. In the next moment, you're in a puddle of tears and struggling to get out of bed and face the day. The palpable grief of loss and the overwhelming feeling of depression continuously seek to suffocate and crush me. I often question the point of my life, even when things are going well.

September and October are particularly difficult months for me due to major losses and tragedies that have happened. They throw me down the rabbit hole of grief and depression.

· The 6-year anniversary of the cancer call was September 14, which changed my life forever.

· The anniversary of a personal tragedy is this month.

· Mourning yet more friends who have died from stage IV cancer.

· I've been medically induced into menopause officially four years now.

Almost every speaker at a cancer conference or any conference, especially when it's a woman speaking, always talks of how their husband and kids keep them going, etc. Well, I have neither, so what is the point of me pushing through the struggles in my life? I don't have a legacy to pass down. The items I've saved and treasured since I was a child through college mean nothing to everyone but me.

I get ticked off when I mention this to people who have a spouse and kids and they say no one cares about the sentimental things and to just toss them. I think many miss the point. To me, it is the story that I want to share with every picture or sentimental item because it's about my life. I'm an only child. I don't have nieces or nephews. The realization that my name and memories end with me is a continuous gut punch.

I still don't physically recognize myself. I consistently struggle with this unnatural chemo-induced curly hair that has made a comeback thanks to more hair falling out due to a certain hair product reaction. I've been struggling with my weight since my mid-30's thanks to all the different antidepressants, hormone changes, and now induced menopause. Then add all the steroids from chemo and the many, many surgeries and steroids post-treatment, no wonder I'm presently the size of a southern whale!

When I make the statement the right man for me doesn't exist in this life, it makes others uncomfortable. I know it would be different if I fit into a category, but I'm deemed "too different" by the bulk of men. Black and white people have said this basically my whole life.

I continue to deal with chronic pain, weight gain, unnaturally curly hair, soul-crushing loss of what can never be, and what I didn't know I wanted until all my lady parts were removed along with zero sex drive. Existing in this Black skin, in this country, and in this body, adds an even deeper layer of grief and depression that I don't have the energy to address at the moment.

I honestly don't know why I keep going to therapy. I suppose it's my natural resilience to keep pushing forward. Still, the enormity of these permanent and unwanted changes literally sucks my breath away.

And now I'm going to wake my cat Baby Natey (Nathan Edgar) up because I need a hug.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

This post originally appeared on Life on the Cancer Train on October 10, 2020. It is republished

with permission.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/toggling-grief-depression-happiness