Positive Aspects of Fibromyalgia

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Looking on the Bright Side: Good Things About Fibromyalgia

Whenever you hear about fibromyalgia, or any other chronic illness for that matter, you will primarily hear about all of the negative aspects of it. That is because there are a lot of them. Being chronically ill is an extremely difficult thing to deal with and can easily lead to depression.

That it is why it is so necessary, vital even, to pause and reflect on some of the benefits and positive aspects of chronic illness. I know, I know, that sounds like an oxymoron. You're thinking, "What in the world could be a benefit of having a chronic illness?" Well, let me tell you.

I believe that there can be something positive found in any situation. At least I believe that most days – I have plenty of dark days when I have difficulty imagining that there is anything good in the world. But then I snap out of it and remember I have many things to be grateful for. I genuinely believe there is always something to be thankful for!

1. You Find Your Inner Strength

Chronic illness makes you realize just how strong you are. You will have moments when you will think you cannot take any more, when you feel that you just cannot go on. You will consider giving up and not fighting anymore. But the next morning you wake up and you start the fight all over again. You will find an inner strength you never knew you had.

I found a quote several years ago that I love and that has been a true inspiration: "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have."

Most people view strength as someone who can lift heavy things, or maybe someone who is never affected by the bad things that get thrown their way. But being sick has taught me that is not what true strength is. True strength is being affected by life, but not letting it stop you. It is not ever giving up no matter how tempting it is.

The true meaning of strength is fighting to have the best life possible, even when faced with tribulation. True strength is putting on a happy face in spite of the pain you are enduring. Having fibromyalgia has shown me that I have that strength. Having fibromyalgia has shown me that I am a warrior. Having fibromyalgia has shown me that I can conquer anything.

2. You Can Sympathize With And Help Other Sick People

When you have an illness you suddenly understand other people who have illnesses on a whole new level. You can be more sympathetic for others pain, whether it be physical, mental, or emotional. You can put yourself in their shoes in a way you were never able to do before.

No, I don't know exactly how someone with cancer feels. But I can imagine their fear, frustration, and anger. I know how exasperating it is to go from one doctor's appointment to another. How infuriating it can be to deal with doctors, insurance companies, and pharmacies. I know the confusion of deciding which treatment method to go with.

I also know they are tired of others' ignorance, and of the barrage of questions. I know they sometimes want to talk about something other than their illness, and pretend to be normal for a while. I know what to say and what not to say. I know to show interest and concern, but not to overwhelm them.

Therefore, by my being sick, I can possibly be of help to someone else. Maybe something I say, or don't say, can be encouragement to them. Maybe my story can help them. Maybe my positivity despite a negative situation can be an inspiration for them. Maybe I can show them that it's not all downhill, that there are some good things on the horizon.

Next page: finding out who your friends are, and making new ones.

3. You Find Out Who Your Real Friends Are

Having fibromyalgia teaches you a very important lesson. It's a lesson you may not like at first, but it is a good lesson to learn: who your true friends are.

Throughout your life you will meet many people, you will make many friends. But not all of these people truly care about you and want what is best for you.

Some of them, possibly many of them, want you around for their own selfish reasons. Or there may be some who are friends with you simply out of convenience.

But when you have a chronic illness, being your friend is not convenient anymore. You will no longer be able to give and give the way you once did. You will no longer be able to do what everyone else is doing.

You will be limited in what you can do and how often you can do it. Some may not like that and choose not to put the effort into being friends with you. But you also learn who *is* willing to put effort into being a part of your life.

Now that I have fibromyalgia, sadly, I have little energy left for being a good friend and maintaining relationships. But now I know who is worth putting that energy towards. I have seen who has stuck with me through it all.

Personally, I would rather have three close friends, who are more like family than friends, instead of having 100 friends that do not have genuine affection for me. This can be a painful lesson to learn at first, but it does not take long at all to realize that this is really a blessing.

4. You Find A New Community

When you are first diagnosed with fibromyalgia you may feel alone, or like you're some kind of freak. That's how I felt, anyway. I didn't know anyone that had fibromyalgia, everyone told me I was too young to have something like that – I thought there was something severely wrong with me to have this weird, freak illness at the age of 22. But I soon found out that was not even a little bit true.

I found that there were many other people like me, some of whom were my age or younger. Where did I find these people? Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter. There is a whole community of people that suffer from not just fibromyalgia, but just about any chronic illness imaginable.

This community supports and encourages each other and will embrace and accept you, even though they've never met you.

Next page: learning what's important, and finding the keys to happiness.

5. You Learn What Is Most Important In Life

Being chronically ill wakes you up to what is important in life. Is it having the perfect house and the newest, nicest car? Is it having outer beauty and popularity? No, those things fall pretty far down on the list.

What is important is constantly growing as a human being, constantly striving to be a better person than you were yesterday. What is important is helping others, even if all you can do to help is offer some words of encouragement.

As the Bible says at Acts 20:35, “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” What is most important is having people around you that you care about and that care about you.

6. You Find The Keys to Happiness

When you suffer with pain on a daily basis, you learn a lot. You learn to find gratitude in all the good things that do happen, especially the little things. Most people would take for granted being able to go grocery shopping, but you view it as a blessing.

Being able to get out of the house, being able to pick your own food, being able to interact with other people, these are all things you are thankful for. Having that gracious attitude makes your life better and will lead to inner happiness.

You will learn to be patient. Partially, because you will have no choice but to wait, a lot. At first this is annoying, but eventually you realize things will happen when they happen. Being impatient does not get you anywhere any faster, so you might as well slow down and calmly wait. Learning the art of patience leads to a sense of serenity and happiness.

You will learn to find joy in all the little things as well. That gorgeous sunset that most people only give a cursory glance? You will stare at it with wonderment and awe partially because you will just be happy to be outside that day!

You will learn to be content with the things you need. Clutter brings unnecessary stress into your life, and you have enough of that already. So you will learn what you really need and you will be able to part with the rest. You will learn to live a simple life, and that, too, will make your life better and will lead to inner happiness.

Conclusion

A lovely young lady who suffers from multiple chronic illnesses once said: “Being ill has changed my life dramatically, but not all that change was bad.” Doesn’t that just sum it all up? I am sure that many other sufferers would agree with that sentiment, I certainly know that I do.

I have found that in order to successfully survive a chronic illness it is critical to have a positive outlook in life, no matter how dark and bleak things may look on the surface. I have found that there most certainly is always, always, always something to be thankful for!