

CHRONIC PAIN • POSITIVE • UNCATEGORIZED

Positive Things I have Learned From Chronic Illness

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- *How to be alone*

When you have chronic pain you spend a lot of time on your own. Whether it is in your bed, in the dark, like me, or out on the couch. You're going to spend a lot of time by yourself and you will eventually learn how to be comfortable when it's only you around.

- *How to Self-Soothe*

When you're on an operating table its just you. Your family is gone. There is no one but yourself, so you begin to learn how to self soothe. It can get you through operations, testing, late nights when you're in too much pain to move. You can kick on that part of your brain and get through whatever is ahead.

- *Gaining a renewed closeness to your caretaker/family.*

No matter how close you are to your family, you will reach a whole new stratosphere of connection. Whether it's those days where you're literally in so much pain you can't move on your own, or support going from doctor to doctor, all the hospital stays. You can't avoid the closeness that brings and might I say, that is pretty awesome.

- *Finding out who your true friends are*

Most people will stick by you at first, but once they realize you're not getting better, they bail. Some people do it consciously, and some just grow distant subconsciously. But those that stay around are the ones that truly love you and will completely have your back the whole way through.

- *How to say no*

When you're ill, you have limitations. Only you know what they are. And the rest of the world are not mind readers, they don't know when the limit is approaching. You have to open your mouth and voice your needs, and when need be, say no completely guilt free.

- *Learning how insurance works*

Most 21 year olds don't have even the most basic understanding of how insurance in America works. Being chronically ill both as a minor and an adult has not only given me a basic understanding of how the system and our individual plans over the years have worked, but all the intricate details and how to work with insurance when things aren't so neat and clean.

- *Having greater compassion*

The greater part of people my age are in a selfish point in their lives where it is all about what they need and want at every given moment. They don't think of other people before themselves. Chronic illnesses cause you to be aware of all the things in your life you can show love to. You can increase outward love to balance out the amount of inward love.

- *Greater able to appreciate the small things in life.*

When you're chronically ill you are much more likely to be moving at a slower pace. This means you can stop and smell the flowers, but you can also appreciate what an accomplishment it is that some people can get out of bed.

- *Humility*

While chronically ill you can't always do what you want. Sometimes you have to lose the ego, and ask for help (easier said than done). You won't beat it all solo, you need a support system.

- *Learning the Frailty of human life*

You learn the truth of the human condition. That life can be taken and no one can escape it. So you have to take the moments you're given and run with them.