

Live Like You're Well

A Group Class for those Experiencing Chronic Illness

PART I: Fighting It

Are you bone-tired and weary? Ready to drop from the exhaustion of figuring out how to live with this...THING...that has interrupted life and is attacking you or a loved one? What about those words we hear kicked around so casually? Words like "degenerative" and "incurable" and "life expectancy?" Part I explores ways to "own" the disease without letting it own you. Pull up a chair. Breathe. You aren't alone. It's going to be okay.

PART II: Acknowledging It

Acknowledging it doesn't mean ignoring it, escaping it, fixing it, or any other means of actively avoiding it. If you're like me, that ship has sailed. The real struggle in this stage is how. How do I stop fighting this disease, and start owning it, without letting it own me? Does acknowledging it mean that I become my disease? That I let it win? No. No, it doesn't. Shhh...Be still. It's okay.

PART II: Surviving It

Answers from the medical community can sound so sterile: "Exercise." "Don't miss doses of your medicine." "Keep a regular sleep schedule." By now, you're probably ready to throw something at the medical person spouting off a pre-made script. Many of us have no idea how we will feel from one day to the next, or even from one hour to the next. Not to speak of managing time-suckers like appointments, labs, and tests. How do I find the time, means, and energy to do the things that will help me? Or, on some days, even to make sure I eat?

PART III: Living In It

Now that we've stopped struggling, and we're out of "crisis" mode; now that we understand how to acknowledge it without letting it run our lives; now that understand we are not our disease; now... we are ready to live. Only we may have forgotten what that looks like. This session is a refresher course on how to live in a world that doesn't understand.

PART IV: Making Peace with It

As hard as we try, there will still be meltdowns, low points, disappointments, people we thought were better, days when we recognize we have lost some of our capability. There will be days when we spiral out of control and crash and burn. It's okay. We'll discuss tactics to help you step back, breathe, refocus. It happens to all of us. Just breathe. You'll survive. I promise.

PART V: Transitioning through It

For the first time since your diagnosis, maybe you are finally finding a rhythm and a cadence to life. Maybe it's time to re-define some words we've been afraid to think about until now: words like "happiness" and "fulfillment." Maybe it's time to redefine "success."

PART VI: Living Above It

What happens when the drought in your soul is quenched with fresh hydration? What occurs when you're finally satiated, but the blessings keep coming? What happens? The same thing that happens to a teacup that's filled too full. You have overflow. You have margin. You have a gift to offer someone else. What were you made for? Finally, we get to think about that. We get to live above our disease.

Part VII: Leveraging It

If we are good managers of our assets, there comes a point when it becomes necessary, prudent, and wise to learn how to leverage those assets for a greater good. This segment is devoted to building our Treasure Chest of experiences that we can pull out and leverage to help one who comes behind us, or to create an artistic experience to share with the world. How will you leverage the treasure of what this disease has brought you?

Part VIII: Afterthoughts

Game. Set. Match. You win. This disease you carry with you...you met it on its own turf, conquered it, made it your possession, forced it to become a blessing. Now that you're reaping the rewards...what's next?