Keeping Faith with MS

by LEEANNE LAPUM

The Importance of Faith with MS

In my last article I shared my goal of being able to walk at our daughter's upcoming wedding. I know now that isn't a possibility.

I'm disappointed, but there's nothing that I can do about it. After years of inactivity, my muscles have atrophied. It's a harsh reality of my deteriorating condition. It is what it is. I still rock and exercise daily. It's good for my circulation.

I would love to conquer my ultimate goal one day, but no matter what happens I will maintain a positive outlook and huge smile on my face. I refuse to look like I've been conquered by my illnesses.

MS could've taken my life years ago. Breast cancer and its treatment could've killed me. I'm a survivor. That alone is something to be thankful for.

Staying Positive

What has gotten me through it? It's really not that complicated. My faith plays a big part in my daily routine. Because of it I know that I am not alone to face my struggles. God is bigger than any struggle I may face. He's right beside me every step of the way. No matter what happens I know that God is allowing it for a reason. He is “walking” by my side. I am not alone.

I have dear friends who come alongside me on a daily basis. One in particular has been there for me for years. We share our struggles, challenges and successes. I can share openly without fear of being judged. I am so thankful to have her as a part of my life.

Anyone who's known me knows that I tend to be a little on the stubborn side. Maybe not just a little. I admit it. I'm very stubborn. That could be a good thing. If I weren't stubborn, I would've rolled over and died years ago. That's not going to happen.

Stubbornness and my faith are what get me through every day. I never give up. I have days when my struggles are a little overwhelming, but I refuse to let my circumstances gain victory over me. There is always someone who is dealing with something that is more difficult than what I face.

Here are things that help me survive on a daily basis:

- Make a conscious effort to be thankful for another day.
- Concentrate on other’s struggles.
- Set positive daily goals.
- Find something you enjoy to occupy your mind.

- Build a strong support group.
- Think of yourself as a survivor. Determine not to let circumstances conquer you.

Just like any other major health issue, MS will change your life. I like to think that it's made my family stronger. I know that they're more sensitive when dealing with others who have health issues. I'm very thankful for that. It's given them a real servant’s heart. It's also united us as a family.

I'm determined not to dwell on the downsides of MS. I've learned to concentrate on the positives of MS. Sometimes that's easier to do than other times.

Looking on the Bright Side

I know that I'm not alone. Everyone has their battles to fight. Whether they are physical, mental or spiritual. Take them one at a time. Conquer them and move on.

Even when I'm feeling my worst I determine to keep a smile on my face. That isn't always easy. I've learned to allow myself to fail occasionally. Everyone does at one point or another in their lives. Know that it’s okay to have down days. It's okay to be frightened and disappointed.

At my daughter’s wedding, I'll be sitting on the outside but standing on the inside. At least I'm alive to enjoy it.

I won't reach my ultimate goal of walking down the aisle. But, once again, there is a humorous side to being in a wheelchair. A dear friend thinks that I should decorate my chair for the occasion. I don't know that I agree with that.

However, I can guarantee that I will have a huge smile on my face. My hair and makeup will be done. I'll be dressed up and good to go. Nothing, including MS, is going to stop me from enjoying her special day.