

Dear Me



Dear Me, of three years, nine months, and 15 days ago:

Your life just changed. Changed from six weeks ago before this all started. Changed from 5 a.m. this morning when Mike woke up, left side completely numb and decided to drive himself to the ER so you could get the kids off to school. Changed from an hour ago when you were sitting alone, nervously waiting for him to be out of the MRI.

The love of your life has just received the life changing diagnosis of his life.

The “well, it’s not going to be **that**” diagnosis. Sure, some urgent care doc mentioned it couple weeks ago, but you totally blew it off when Mike brought it up at home after his third or fourth appointment. Except, it is that. And the only MS you know is somewhere in your memories of the 1970s or 1980s, some friend’s aunt in a wheelchair, a distant cousin of your mom’s who had lost his sight.

Dear Me: You’re squeezing his hand too tight. You want to crawl on the hospital bed and trade places with him, but you can’t.

You are about to go through weeks of panic, it’s part of the process, but please know that it will ease. So much information is going to come flying in from every direction. The “what-ifs” will take over at first, but you will learn to push them down. Eventually, you will gain a new perspective, and that will make you even more appreciative of all the good days yet to come.

You need to step away from the internet. Yes, it is full of information and helpful websites. But don’t forget that it is also the place that will tell you where to find Bigfoot, and how to regrow your hair by rubbing onion juice on your head. Do not get consumed by the world

wide web of worry.

You will still travel. He will still carry all the big bags through the airport. You will still go hiking, you will still fall behind, and he and the kids will still have to stop and wait for you. The cold beverage at the end of the trail will taste that much better.

You'll hold hands more.

You will learn how to cook. I know, this one sounds unbelievable, but you will. You will read labels and learn about food. Because diet is important, but mostly because so many things are new and out of control, and this is the one little thing that you can control. And with that, you will accept that your family will not eat the homemade turmeric gummies; you're going to spend a week trying to finish those yourself because you don't want them to go to waste (same for kale chips).

You'll learn that a lot more people than you think are in your new community, and like in any community, there are different perspectives on everything. Take each opinion and story as information and then decide how it relates to you.

You've always been proud of your husband, but you have never realized how proud you could be of his strength and perseverance. You will tear up every time he and your son take off on their dirt bikes. Every. Single. Time.

Dear Me: The "What if someday, MS?" will still scare you, but you will savor every single, "Oh, but not today, MS."