

Grief and Silver Linings: An MS Diagnosis



Four years ago, I would never have imagined that I would be diagnosed with MS. I had just finished breastfeeding my youngest child and was juggling a full-time job and a family with two young children.

In the summer of 2017, I started experiencing vertigo symptoms and had difficulty standing up. I assumed the vertigo was a new symptom related to my long history of ear issues. The ear, nose and throat doctor had me do a variety of tests and concluded that my issues were “brain-related.” The ENT advised me that I needed to get an MRI (to rule out a few things). This was all very vague and didn’t make sense.

Honestly, I almost didn’t get an MRI. At the time, it seemed excessive and expensive. When I returned to the ENT to go over my results, my husband came with me, and I couldn’t be more thankful that he was there. The doctor read off a piece of paper in the most monotone voice (he was actually just talking to himself out loud) that I had MS.

It felt like a gut punch, and I couldn’t quite catch my breath, let alone process the unimaginable information that was just dumped on me. They informed me that I needed to go see a neurologist as soon as possible. My husband and I went home and sobbed.

How were we going to tell our children? What does this even mean? Is this a death sentence? Was my life as I knew it over with these two little letters? Of course, we Googled it! That was a terrible idea! There was so much scary information on the internet. My fears grew...

Over the course of the next few weeks, I saw many specialists (thanks to my dear friend who

worked for the MS Society at the time). I slowly started to see that I had been having symptoms for years, but I wasn't listening to my body.

Between a job, a family, a toddler and baby, I was always tired and rundown. "Isn't that just what it feels like to be a mom?"

When I was able to think clearly(ish), I began to connect the dots as to why my gut health was so poor and that there was a legitimate reason for my permanent fatigue. I also had migraines, depression (on and off), poor balance, loss of feeling in my hands and right arm, memory loss, and difficulty with my right eye. All of these are symptoms of MS.

On a personal level, my husband and I had also been wrestling with the idea of continuing to grow our family. I had successfully given birth to two beautiful children, but had suffered three miscarriages (and had been in the adoption process). We had been praying for a sign to see if we should keep trying. The day we heard the diagnosis, we got our answer. I grieved the losses of bringing MS to our family and the loss of future babies. MS changed my relationships with my husband and my kids. We eventually went back to counseling to work through how this disease has changed our marriage. MS continues to feel like a silent and unwanted intruder to our family.

Slowly over the course of a few years, I started to see the silver lining to my diagnosis. Without MS, I wouldn't have learned how to truly love my body for all it does. Without MS, I wouldn't have fallen in love with nutrition and exercise. With MS, I have a better appreciation for the beautiful children I am fortunate enough to have. I would never have wanted this, but that is how life goes, isn't it? You get what you need, not what you want. I'm proud to be an MS Warrior and join this amazing community to find a cure! Together we are #MSStrong.