

Man Up vs. Open Up



As a young boy growing up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, I heard this phrase a lot. You have to “man up” and don’t show your feelings or emotions. Showing your emotions/feelings was a sign of a weak man.

This all changed when I had to come around and man up about my multiple sclerosis diagnosis with my children and wife of seven years. You see, I was a single parent for a long time, so I thought I had to be a tough disciplinarian, without showing my feelings or emotions. Remember, this was part of my DNA.



My two wonderful children

It was tough trying to show mental toughness while at the same time trying to find the right words for the family concerning my diagnosis. I decided to do something totally radical: I let go of the past me and opened up.

The MS diagnosis hit me right in the gut, and it hurt. Deciding to show some of my emotions/feelings and explaining it to my family was really tough for me. I didn't even have all the answers to my primary progressive multiple sclerosis. I informed my family that I would let them know about the conversations between me and my neurologist.



Me and my wife, Dee

Opening up gave me the opportunity to really focus on me: spiritual, family and the future.

This newfound me decided to find out everything I could about my MS (workshops, MS events, Walk MS, news, etc).

I kept pursuing information so I could be better prepared. For what, I don't know, but I needed to know.

Here are 4 tips I would like to share with you about MS. Please try them; it could make a world of difference.

1. Be open and honest with loved ones concerning your multiple sclerosis.
2. Inform family members/loved ones **what type of MS you have** and what kind of treatment you are receiving.
3. **Get involved** with your local MS Support Group (if you don't have one, start one!) or Society office.
4. Most importantly - enjoy your life!

When you allow yourself to open up, you are really executing Man Up!