

Moments in Time



There are certain moments in your life that you'll never forget. For me, those include the moment when I realized my husband was about to propose, when I first laid eyes on my daughter and when I was told I had multiple sclerosis.

I remember it like it was yesterday. I had just spent the last four days on a wild goose chase trying to understand for the life of me how the vision in my right eye just seemed to disappear. After several doctor appointments and tests, no one seemed to have any answers; but, I knew deep down something was terribly wrong as I impatiently awaited the results of my MRI.

The thought of that call still haunts me to this day. I picked up the phone and within seconds, my life had instantly changed. "There are lesions on your brain indicating you definitively have multiple sclerosis. I'm sorry," the doctor said. I fell to my knees and began crying uncontrollably. I had never been so scared in my life. Within seconds, my husband dropped down next to me and held me like he'd never held me before. With no words spoken, only tears, we both knew our lives would never be the same.

Fear instantly took me over as I played those words over and over again in my mind. I thought of what I knew about the disease and images of wheelchairs popped into my mind. "How could this happen?" I said over and over again. I was a perfectly healthy 29-year-old. I had recently gotten married, had a great job and was happier than I had ever been in my life. I rarely even got a cold, how could I possibly have an incurable disease?

At that moment, I knew I had to make a choice - I could either let MS control me or I could take control of the situation. I could wallow in my fears and sadness and dwell in this

unexpected news or I could put one foot in front of the other and tackle the challenges that lay ahead. Within days of my diagnoses, I pledged to myself and those around me that I would not let MS stop me from living my wonderful life. I had too much to look forward to to let MS slow me down. I knew the months and years ahead may not be easy, but I also knew that I had something bigger to fight for.

It took me several months to come to grips with what it means to have MS, and still today, almost two years later, I don't have all of the answers and certainly cannot predict what's to come. But, I have learned that so far, I can successfully manage my MS if I take control of my situation - find a doctor and medication that works for me, eat healthy, work out, reduce stress and find time to rest and sleep. There isn't one recipe for treating MS, but living a healthy lifestyle in conjunction with finding an effective medicine has been critical for me. Most importantly, my attitude is key. I believe it's been my determination to live **well** and **strong** that has allowed me to stay both well and strong.