

My Resolution



The holidays can be a difficult time for those living with MS. Some of us struggle with travel, or with the reminder that relationship dynamics change, and having to work double time to keep symptoms in check during flu and party seasons.

So with the start of the new year, it's the perfect time for reflection, to gather ourselves and to perhaps make some New Year's resolutions.

We vow to lose weight, drink less, quit smoking, and travel more. But how do we, as MSers, plan for the year ahead when our lives are often driven by a disease that changes from day to day, sometimes hour to hour? Can this disease keep up with our long-term expectations?

I stopped making "formal" New Year's resolutions years ago, but I **do** use my diagnosis date and my last MRI as markers for comparison to the year prior. There's no particular reason for me to do this, and I'm sure many others do the same. It just seemed like a natural thing to do.

So, when that time of year comes around, I ask myself:

How did I feel the last time I sat in my doctor's office to hear the results of my scans? What have I noticed that has changed since last year—physically, mentally and emotionally? Have I been an advocate for myself in the past year? Am I more informed than I previously was? What can I do within my power to live my best, healthiest life? Am I being a good role model and spokesperson for others struggling with a chronic condition?

I keep my “resolutions” challenging, but realistic and achievable.

I resolve to not let MS stop me from doing anything I want to do.

I resolve to continue to advocate and educate, for myself and for others.

I resolve to not allow myself to feel guilty for having the abilities that I still do. I resolve to feel “enough.”

I resolve to exercise more, not to lose an “x” number of pounds, but to maintain and improve my balance, reaction time, strength and flexibility.

And I resolve to remain grateful:

For my husband and family—the best support system I could ask for.

For my disease remaining (mostly) stable.

For my friends, who regularly check in on me.

For the MS community, for continuing to encourage and inspire me.

And most importantly, I resolve to just **live**. Because life doesn’t stop here. Even if MS makes us pause for moments in time, life keeps going.

And I resolve to go along with it.