

The Adequation Complex



“One of the most important things to someone with a chronic illness is to be treated as an equal. Having MS does not make me any different than someone who does not.”

This was something I used to tell myself every single day since my diagnosis—it got me through the hard times and inspired me to live my highest quality of life. But as I get older and the 4 year anniversary of my diagnosis approaches, I find myself questioning if this is really the case.

While I want to believe that my MS does not make me different than anyone else, the reality is, I am different. On days where my symptoms are particularly trying, I’m reminded that I’m living with a condition that is completely out of my control—it just happened. Sometimes I need to use a cane because my legs are weak, or I can’t drive because my eyes can barely focus.

I am absolutely different; but being different is not necessarily bad.

I strive to empower those like me to step out of their comfort zone and push themselves to their limits to achieve amazing things. But I also want to emphasize that there will be days where things seem nearly impossible because of your limitations... and that’s **okay**.

It’s okay to take a step back when times are a struggle; it’s okay to rest when needed, in fact, it’s necessary. So, while we may want to feel like we aren’t any different than those who don’t have MS—we are. And that’s perfectly fine!

There is a fine line between wanting to be treated as an equal, and the need for people to

understand when I'm having a hard day. I never want someone to look at me when I'm experiencing more noticeable symptoms and say, "What's wrong with you?" I also crave understanding when I truly can't do something simple—say, like unscrew the top of my water bottle.

In the end, the best thing the rest of the world can do for us who live with MS is to just understand.

Understand that I was running half marathons last week and can barely move my legs today.

Understand that I work just as hard as you do and do not want any special privileges just because I am "sick." Understand that I am just like you, but the frosting on my cupcake was piped just a little bit awkwardly.