

The Adventure of a Lifetime

Let me start by saying that I don't have multiple sclerosis. I cannot profess to know first-hand the everyday struggles of living with the disease. Nonetheless, MS has become a major part of my life over the last 12 years ever since my mom met Tim.

Twelve summers ago, my mom, Janet, met the man she would eventually marry. They were both single, in their early 40s and raising teenagers—a stressful time all around.

I remember my mom's nerves as she prepared herself to jump back into the dating world. She wasn't sure if she could handle it. But after her first date with Tim, it felt like a weight lifted off her shoulders. The air had changed. As cheesy as it sounds, they were meant for each other.

Two years later they got married on an old steam engine train, as you do in northern Wisconsin, surrounded by family and friends. They've been inseparable ever since.



Me (left) and my amazing family.

But unfortunately, this isn't a fairy tale. It hasn't all been "happily ever after." Over the years, they have both had their share of medical issues. In 2000, Tim got diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. He's been living with slowly progressing symptoms ever since, and in 2007 at the age of 45, the disease forced him to end his career as a CAD Drafter. On the other hand, Janet has been struggling with rheumatoid arthritis since her early 20s. She also finally had her thyroid removed in 2016, ending a decade-long battle against a variety of health problems like chronic vertigo.

Until recently, Tim's symptoms have been primarily cognitive: memory loss, communication issues, recognition problems, etc. Even so, over the last few years, he has gradually had more and more trouble with the physical side of MS as well. These days you will usually see him supporting himself with a cane and avoiding hot weather.

Okay, you get it. My parents have health problems. They joined "the club." But what does this story have to do with anything? Well, Tim and Janet's struggles with health have prevented them from taking part in a lot of experiences like traveling.

But... that's about to change!

That brings me to why I'm telling you this story in the first place: We are going on a trip! In fact, this is the first time in my parents' lives they are traveling abroad. Despite their health problems, they decided it was time to get passports and experience the world before time runs out.



Tim and my mom on my graduation day.

I'm ecstatic to come along as their travel guide, and on the way, I'm going to fill you in on the tips and tricks we have stumbled upon while traveling with multiple sclerosis. From how to pack your bags to trekking through the airport, we want to try to help others with MS to get out and explore the world anyway.

Bon voyage!