

# Till MS Do Us Part



Growing up in a traditional Armenian household with parents who had an arranged marriage, I was instilled with the belief that marriages were meant to last forever, no matter how difficult things got. While I don't remember anyone explicitly telling me this, the idea was deeply ingrained in me, shaping my understanding of marriage from a very young age.

At the age of 12, I met the man who would be my future husband and a whimsical fairytale began to unfold as I developed a crush on him. Years later, our lives intertwined, and we found ourselves crossing paths and started dating.

We tied the knot. I was 23 and ready to commit myself to this man forever. We had our only child in 2003 and life seemed great, but naturally had its ups and downs. Still, divorce remained unconceivable. That is, until July of 2019.

Life has a way of presenting unforeseen challenges, and mine came in the form of an MS diagnosis. As I navigated this life-altering condition that secretly pained me for over 10 years, it forced me to reevaluate my priorities and question my deepest desires for the future. I knew life was extremely stressful, but wasn't everybody's? That is how life is, right? It's never going to be perfect, right?

While I didn't ever want to admit it to myself, I started to question the compatibility of our long-standing relationship, which had taken its toll on me over the years. I knew this deep in my gut, but it didn't matter because divorce had not been an option. But a life-altering diagnosis made me start contemplating so much in my life – particularly relationships. I had a husband, but felt alone. Gradually, we were growing apart.



The realization that my marriage was no longer fulfilling prompted me to make a difficult decision – to part ways. Breaking free from the mindset that had shaped my upbringing was a momentous step, one that required courage and self-reflection. It was challenging to confront the expectations of family and friends along with the ingrained belief that marriages were unbreakable, but deep down, I knew I deserved happiness and fulfillment. Without my MS diagnosis, I would have continued to sleepwalk through life carrying the negative emotions and stress that would only fuel the progression of the disease.

MS opened doors for me. MS made me realize that I have only one life to live, only one body and brain to care for, and only one chance. Only one person can get me what I deserve and need to live a long, healthy, peaceful and happy life and that is ME. I thank MS for where I am today and I say this over and over again... I wouldn't ever give the diagnosis back. Something had to shake me at the core! Something had to wake me and that something for me was, MS! I can either fight MS, or I can use it to fight for the life I have missed, but have taken back. I choose the latter.