

Reframing the hard times



My art helps me push past my MS.

by Allison Ford

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2008, so I've been living with MS for a while. With the exception of a few stressful times, I've been relatively stable — finishing law school, having two children, making my way to the other side of a few relapses. I know that's not everyone's story, and I sometimes thought maybe my MS had gone away. The MRIs always tell a different story.



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One thing that's brought me peace and stability through it all has been my art. I love working in the abstract, as I can capture memories, imaginings, feelings and organic shapes as seen in my mind. But I imagine that seeing countless brain scans has become a part of my subconscious. I didn't realize it until a medical journal reached out to me to serve as a cover artist. The reason: My art looked medical, like cells, synapses, nerves, active lesions and all things under the microscope. It has those notes (which some might not see as a positive), but on top of that is joyful color, movement and inspiration.

Sometimes, we are given hard news, hard circumstances. In my view, getting a diagnosis of MS is an example. But we can overlay that with our cultivated gifts and passions that give us energy. Sometimes, we need a new lens with which to reframe the hard times. Art is that lens for me. Today, I push past my diagnosis and live in hope every day. Creativity is indeed a gift.

Allison Ford is an abstract and mixed-media artist and lawyer in Greenville, South Carolina. Most important to her, she is a wife and a mother of two little guys, so she spends a lot of time outside playing.

See Allison Ford's art on her website at helloallisonart.com and on her Instagram account [@helloallisonart](https://www.instagram.com/helloallisonart).