

Mental Health 2

Now that I am finally pretty much all up to date with the events of the past 6 months, once again want to discuss the importance of mental health because it isn't easy living with degenerative conditions, regardless of our ages. I want to be able to continue do everything I used to and sometimes it is hard to accept that I can't (that is when I start testing our boundaries and end up in pain). Although at the time I occasionally struggle to remember, I know I can adapt to make my life easier and find a new level of abilities and happiness.

There are two snippets of these past months that I want to share, one was very recent, the other was back in March. I am going to start with the March one. My mother had told my godfather about the impending surgery and he wanted to see me to discuss it, so he came round one evening. I couldn't tell him the details of KFS because at the time I didn't want to think about it, let alone say it, this was when I was at the peak of dreading surgery and was in tears nearly every time I was alone. We discussed surgery etc. and he tried his very best to console me, I kept it together for most of the evening to be fair. Then just as we were finishing dinner he was joking about something and he said something to me. I think that was the last time I cried over the thought of surgery - it's good to let it out.

The more recent incident was just under 2 weeks ago and I was at an interview for an award answering questions. Towards the end one of the interviewers asked me 'where do you see yourself in 5 years?' Pretty much since being diagnosed I stopped planning my life out that far because I honestly do not know what abilities I will have to work with when I get there, if I get there. The question caught me by surprise, and got to me, more than I thought it would to be honest. I don't know whether it was the result of the past months or if it is something I am still trying to work through but it took an emotional toll. I seriously considered going to see a counsellor but I calmed down as I continued to write these chronicles and realised how far I had come. If you had told me back in November I would actually complete the year, I probably would have been very skeptical.

I have seen a counsellor twice this year, once just after I told my tutors this rollercoaster was beginning and the second time when I was trying to come to grips with hurting the people I love and care about. Both times I left counselling much more at peace than when I went in. Perhaps sometimes that is all I need, to just share all the stuff that is endlessly spinning around in my head so someone else can put it in order/perspective. It isn't easy, and it wasn't easy going to counselling either, but it is important to recognise when a more proactive approach to caring for mental health is needed. If I hadn't gone to counselling, I probably would have sunk to depths that nobody wants to go to and that would have only made it all that harder to get back out.

Never underestimate the power of listening because sometimes being listened to is all it takes to put someone back on track. Thank you to all that listened to me, especially my personal tutors!