

Glimpse into supporting the loved ones who are supporting you

I have written about how loved ones can support someone who is sick; a vital aspect in your recovery. Today I want to write about how the one who is sick can help those people who are providing the support.

I find that it is easy to fall into the trap of self pity, and who wants to be around a self pitying sack of bones?! Yes, maybe every inch of your body is hurting, your heart is pounding, your head is spinning, you feel like your lunch may reappear, and at any moment your whole abdomen will cave in on itself in a volcano-like eruption! Sure, I think most people would agree, this feeling would justify ripping someone's head off because they don't do what you want!! But is that really going to help?! Because, that is only going to make them walk off in a huff, and you are left feeling like the lava is erupting all by yourself. Not helpful. Lava erupting from your chest is definitely something you want to go through with someone else!!

Does anyone know any good techniques to get through these situations? Unfortunately, making all those around you into mind readers is not an option.

I am trying to remember to take a breath, to have a quick chat to myself, and remind myself they are trying to help and that even though it is going to take a lot of energy to summon the words to explain what you want, it is going to be a lot easier than trying to apologise later. And not even that; why is it fair to make someone you love feel like crap because you feel like a live volcano. (Sure, easier said than done!).

Someone I know who has a long term illness, takes this approach. She gives herself an allotted time period to feel self pity, sadness, anger, and frustration. She lets herself

dwell and be indulgent in the feeling. And then she stops, and she gets on with life. I am always in awe of this, but if you can practise this, then it is really a good way to deal with it. You can't stop those feelings completely; that is not healthy either, so by letting yourself have them and then taking a breath and getting on with things, is going to make you feel a bit stronger.

Helping those people understand what you feel is also another thing I think will help. I know if I wasn't going through this, I would not understand the feeling of having absolutely no energy. I don't mean, gee I am tired, I have not stopped all day kind of no energy. I mean the kind of no energy that means even lying down you feel exhausted; that just rolling over in your bed needs determination. So sometimes, words are even a hassle. Even experiencing it, I am surprised sometimes. The effort required to do the most basic things can be massive. When your brain is churning and it is hard to follow a conversation, it is so difficult to put the words together to explain something, or to talk nicely to someone!

Let people understand the feeling of frustration and disappointment you feel about being in this situation too. When you feel sad that you can't go out to a party or a dinner invite because you feel too sick, then you need to talk to someone about how that makes you feel, and that you would really like some company to make up for it (instead of saying nothing and then feeling angry that they went out and left you alone). Sure, there needs to be something from their end too, as it isn't your fault you are sick and they need to think about sacrificing a little so that you can be a little happier (and then you will be nicer and then they will be happier too!!).

Another thing that I think is important is to give as much as you can on your good days. Don't over do it and wipe yourself out of course, but if you get a good day, or a few hours or even a twenty minute slot when you feel a bit more reasonable, then have a nice chat where you can be focused on the other person, or give lots of smiles, or go out and do something.

Whether this is with your partner, your family or with friends, they will appreciate seeing the real you, and you will feel good for it too. Take advantage of the good moments and not just for your benefit but for them too.

Obviously, these suggestions are easier said than put into practise. But by not taking the people who are supporting you into account, the fall out can be monumental, and can affect your health too. They are your partner/family/friends because you love them and they love you; ultimately you all need to remember that and not let any illness beat that.

