



**COURAGE IS BEING SCARED TO DEATH... AND SADDLING UP
ANYWAY.**

-JOHN WAYNE

Worried. Scared. Anxious. These are all things I feel these days. Three years ago, I was in my social workers office and I remember telling her I wasn't feeling very well, and that was the last thing I remember. My next clear memory is of the ambulance crew wheeling me into the ER. The doctor gave me a CT scan and said he was concerned because they saw something on the scan. The doctor believed I had a stroke. The doctor kept me overnight for observation and gave me an MRI later that night. Early the next morning the neurologist came into my room and informed me I had a brain tumor.

A few days later I met with the brain surgeon to go over my options. I choose to have the surgeon remove the tumor entirely and get it tested to see if it was cancer. It took a while for the results to come back, but they were what I was afraid of. Even though the surgery removed most of the tumor, there were still remnants of it in my brain. My treatment options were to wait several months and have another MRI and see if the cancer had grown, radiation treatment, or chemotherapy. I really didn't want to wait it out and see what happens because I would rather get it treated it right way. I knew I didn't want to go the chemotherapy either because I didn't feel like dealing with all the side effects. I decided on the radiation therapy. I was forced to come in everyday 5 days a week for a month for treatment.

I'm required to have an MRI every 6 months to make sure the cancer hadn't returned. I did have a little bit of a scare when at my one year she said she saw some additional growth around the area and wanted me back for another MRI in 3 months. Thankfully it was just some tissue damage from my radiation therapy. I had my latest MRI in October and while it could have been better news, I'll continue to remain positive and try and live my life to the fullest.

A saying I have "Is hope for the best but prepare for the worst." A saying which has helped me cope with this obstacle in my life. I decided a long time ago there is no point in spending time worrying about what could happen. I decided I must use radical acceptance and tell myself it is completely out of my hands. Even though it will always be in the back of my mind, I decided to just keep living my life to the fullest even though it is very difficult sometimes.

This is going to sound bad, but in some ways I feel lucky. Lucky, because most people go through life never knowing when or where they are going to die, but I do know. I know enough to make the most out of my last days. Going to see some things I always wanted to see and doing some of the things I always wanted to do is what's important to me.

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