In which I start Week 2 and it becomes apparent I am no expert

April 1, 2015 By Grace Campbell

I've been thinking about why it's so important for me to document this journey. I love to write. I need to write like people need to breathe. Loving writing is a good reason to **write,** but is it a good enough reason for you to read it?

I thought about what I wanted to see when I was looking for information.

I wanted to know I was not alone. I wanted to know that I could reach out across thousands of miles, and touch the hand of someone who knew, in their bones, what it was like to live with this virus. I wanted knowledge. I wanted to know what side effects hit when. What they felt like. How long they lasted. How people were managing this on a day to day level. I could find that information presented in a medical way, but not a human way. I wanted the truth, but I didn't want to be terrified.

So that's really all I can offer you. Want it? Here it is. Week 2.

Tonight I felt slammed. Tired, tired, tired. I dealt with a multitude of issues at work today. Every time I went to sit down someone needed to speak to me on the phone, or I had to respond to an email, or an enquiry, or someone knocking on the door. I need to manage that better. As the boss it's hard not to be available, because that's what makes you a good one. But for the next few months, they'll have to manage without me being as on-game. Prioritise, triage.

I can tell by looking in the mirror that my bilirubin levels are increasing. I am getting yellowing in the whites of my eyes. I'm not bright buttercup yet, but you can notice it. Everything I've read says if it hits, it tends to do so in the first week or so and dissipate by the fourth week. Here's hoping, or I'm going to spend my time looking like an extra for the Twilight werewolf scenes.

I can't gauge my haemoglobin. I don't think it's dropping rapidly but I just can't get a reading on it. I still walk every morning, I still make roughly the same time and distance, I still enjoy it and don't struggle, but I am tired by the afternoon.

Still minimal nausea, headaches only happen if I'm not hydrated and I am not suffering any skin conditions. One important thing I learned last night is that if you don't want to be up three times in the night to pee, don't drink much water after 9pm. Seriously.

I'd like to hope that this is as bad as it gets, but one thing my illness has taught me is to never underestimate its sneaky impact. So every day is a new day, every day is what it is.

Non-expert tip: if you are on the V-Pak with ribavirin (or even without!) get one of those pill boxes with the days of the week marked on it. Sure you'll feel like your grandmother, but you'll know at a glance whether or not you've remembered to take your medication. If it makes you feel better, go all bad-ass on it with fake tattoos and glitter.

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