



Four Ways to Keep a Positive Attitude During Illness

4 Ways to Keep a Positive Attitude During Chronic Illness

When you're sick, it can be hard to stay positive. If it's a cold or flu and passes quickly, things return to normal after a short time. If you have a chronic, long-term, or life-threatening illness, that can be a much different challenge.

With every illness, there are good and bad days. Sometimes you'll feel better than at other times. ***Having good moments and staying positive overall, though, is possible even during illness.***

Dealing with a Diagnosis

When you first receive a diagnosis of a serious or chronic illness, it can be exceedingly difficult to cope with the fear and anger.

It's natural to have these kinds of emotions, even if it's counterproductive. There are said to be 5 steps of grieving when diagnosed with a chronic disease, although not terminal the grieving process is for the loss of one's old life.

The life where one had boundless energy, love for life, being physically fit and able to partake in most activities.

1) Denial

The first one is denial "this cant be happening to me" phase whilst trying to absorb and learn as much about the condition, then deciding that it wont really affect life or change ones way of living. ***Not true of course***

2) **Anger**

The anger stage, anger that this has happened! Why me? How can this be? The anger and rage at the universe for having an incurable disease. Angry about the changes and challenges that will happen, and the worst thing is that there is nothing that can be done to change it.

3) **Bargaining**

The bargaining stage is loaded with “What-ifs” – what if I had been a better person, would this have made a difference? What if I had picked up the signs earlier?

4) **Depression**

Learning to adjust or change your life can fill one with depression, you may find yourself moving through life in a haze, hating what you have become, tired of being ill all the time and wanting this all to go away.

5) **Acceptance**

Finally, the acceptance stage, where one comes to terms with the condition, the changes in life that we may be required to make. The fact that our old lives are gone but we can embrace our new life and learn to find ways of living albeit differently.

Once we have found acceptance, we are able to embrace life, new friends and develop new hobbies and interests around our disease. We learn to cherish the good and bad and find enjoyment out of the simple things life has to offer. Its not a death sentence after all.

The important thing is to give yourself some time to be upset, work through the 5 stages and then start focusing on all the good that's still in your life. There are many things to be thankful for and staying positive can actually help you feeling better longer.

You will also have a lot of questions you'll want to ask, once the diagnosis has had some time to sink in. ***When you ask questions, ensure you get the information you need from your doctor.*** If he seems indifferent, it may be time to get a second opinion or a doctor who has a better bedside manner, so you feel more hopeful.

What If You're Sick for a Long Time?

With serious illnesses, you may remain sick for some time. If you spend your time thinking of the good things that are still available to you, you'll still experience happiness. ***Even small joys can keep you positive and peaceful when you allow yourself to feel the joy of the moment.***

To help you stay joyful, consider these options:

1. **Spend time with loved ones.** Use this time to get closer to those you care about. Rather than engaging in idle chitchat to pass the time, talk with them about things that really matter to both of you. Share your thoughts, feelings, and desires.
2. **What *can* you do?** Focus on things you're still able to do and enjoy, as opposed to the things you can't.
3. **Help others.** You'll find that doing what you can to help others helps you as well. Focusing on the needs of other people can make you feel better about yourself. ***For everyone who is facing a serious illness, there are people who are worse off in some way.*** When you reach out to them, it puts your struggles in perspective and gives you someone to relate to.
4. **Use positive affirmations.** Replace worry and negative thoughts with positive statements as soon as they appear. With repetition, you'll begin to do this automatically. Soon, you'll discover a more peaceful, positive, and joyful mindset, which can also help you physically.

You'll still face challenging days and trying situations, but there's happiness to be found even when you're sick.

Be willing to open your heart and mind so you can find that joy. Even with a serious illness, it's still possible to laugh, love, and experience great joy if you only allow it to come into your life.

by Lynn Croker