

## Twenty Thoughts to Remember If You Love Someone with Multiple Sclerosis (MS).



“Laughter IS the BEST Medicine!”

1. I have MS, but it doesn't have me.
2. I am not my disease.
3. MS is not who I am.
4. Please be patient with me.
5. Giving me a “tough love” push is good.
6. Allow me to take a break from myself sometimes.

7. Just let me cry when MS overwhelms me.
8. Can we talk about it?
9. Your love and support are so important to me.
10. MS is enormous in my life; help me make it smaller.
11. How can I help you?
12. Thank you for loving me and being here for me.
13. Life can be beautiful when we share it together.
14. You don't cause my irritable moments, MS does.
15. The ravages of MS pale when you hold and comfort me.
16. MS Support Groups help me to know there are others like me.
17. Remind me to exercise every day. My memory is a bit shabby.
18. Help me schedule eating healthy meals.
19. Relationships we have with each other and with other people are both important.
20. Love me as I love you.

This is just a sample of the many reasons to love someone who has MS. There are many more. There is an opportunity for you to add yours at the end of this article.

Loving someone can be wonderful and difficult at the same time. When MS is involved, the difficulties can be overwhelming. While there may be many reasons to love someone, adding MS to the relationship causes unbearable strain for some.

Recently, I talked with a middle-aged woman who said her husband told her he was leaving her. He couldn't stand being married to someone who had MS.

This scene often plays out for a number of reasons:

1. He was afraid of future MS episodes.
2. He doesn't love her anymore.
3. He found someone else and won't admit it to her.

4. He felt unworthy of her.
5. MS had changed her.
6. They both had changed.
7. People are not the same when disease enters the picture.

While one of these reasons may explain why this man might have chosen to leave his sick, vulnerable wife, there are many explanations for his behavior.

Angel Blair, author of blog comments on MSAA, says:

“MS likes to weasel in and get in the way of relationships sometimes. It has a mind of its own, a differing agenda and likes to demand attention – all attention. MS can sort of mimic a toxic relationship, so it’s good to notice and call out these traits to avoid draining connections in the future. MS can be greedy and selfish. It can try to tear down your spirit and diminish positive affirmations. MS can try to change your perspective of how you see yourself and tell you no much of the time. It can be strenuous and exhausting and not give anything in return. Though you may take care of your MS it does not necessarily take care of you. It’s in these ways and others that MS can sometimes be a billboard for what a healthy relationship does not look like.”

I am fortunate to be married to a kind, gentle man who knew shortly after we met MS played a part of my life. He married me in spite of MS. Ours is a healthy relationship. Of course, we don’t always agree. But the good far outweighs any not-so-good in our marriage.

I was diagnosed with MS in July 1958, two months after my high school graduation when college and career plans predominated my mind. Mother’s tears and dad’s chagrined look in the neurologist’s office on that fateful day failed to deter me.

The geography of a northern state like Pennsylvania where I grew up and went to college likely contributed to my MS. That is one of the suspected factors since many people from northern areas contract the disease. Stress is also a contributing factor to the onset of MS.

Stress is often involved in relationships which can be difficult or harmonious. It depends to a large extent on how much positive energy is applied by the parties involved. Sustaining a relationship takes commitment, loyalty, romance and so much more.

Back then, I happily skipped off to college.

A reminder of the reality of MS popped up each semester when the stress of final exams brought on an exacerbation. Numbness or paralysis somewhere in my body sent me home for two weeks of complete bed rest. Mom's TLC (Tender Loving Care) always allowed her only child to return to college courses afterward.

Stress is also a contributing factor to the onset of MS. Any two people will have stress in the relationship. Relationships can be both difficult and harmonious. The result depends on how much positive energy is applied by both parties involved.

Do you have what it takes to maintain a relationship?

Do you want a relationship?

If you responded yes, perhaps you have a thought to add to "Twenty Thoughts to Remember if You Love Someone with MS!"

Leave your comment below, and then send your name, email address and comment(s) to [gail.norris@aol.com](mailto:gail.norris@aol.com). I will respond shortly. Thank you for participating in the discussion.

#### Author Bio:

Judith Norris is a freelance writer living in the Tampa Bay area of Florida. She and her husband adopted two shelter cats, travel and play Scrabble games. Their retirement activities may include relocating to Panama.