

Dear friends and family,

I don't have a lot of things to share. But I wanted to reach out and tell people that I am experiencing what I am calling the *new normal*.

Yesterday was Gay Pride Sunday. But we spent the day at home, taking a nap and relaxing in the back patio. We have never been big sun people. But now, being out in the sun has its own challenges. Better to be sitting in the shade and apart from the mad crowd.

Also, sitting with my trusty Optune cap. It turns out to be four arrays, that I affix to my freshly shaved head. Each array is filled with little nickel sized transducers. I have the opportunity to wear it for minimum of 18 hours a day. While not as obvious as a tinfoil hat, you to get some odd looks when you're out in public.

Two weeks ago, I went through my first chemo treatment (without radiation that is). It was for five days in a row. That seemed like a small request, after coming off 60 days of it earlier. But this time they upped the dosage from 140 mg to 300 mg. By the third day, I was definitely feeling it, and it continued until 8 to 10 days. Evidently, this was a test to see how I would take 300 mg. Next month it will be 400 mg. Lucky me. But I still believe it's a matter of expectations. Next time I will know what I'm in for and will plan in advance.

This is an opportunity to say thank you to several people who gave me critical advice along the way.

- The first, my palliative care doctor, because you told me to save my best times of day for myself.
- The second, my budtender, who help me get CBD gummy's: sleep aids. That man knew was he was talking about..
- The third, was one of my Wider Horizons friends, who gave me some unsolicited haberdashery advice. Carol brought a wonderful dinner that we ate on the deck. At some point she referred to my new hat has "bad ass." It wasn't until a few days later that I asked one of my "younger" friends if there was something odd about my new cap. He informed me that the gray and white American flag design was Aryan supremacists' logo. Who knew?

I appreciate those people who really know how to show compassion. Unlike people who show pity, there are many of you who know how to show compassion. Compassionate people don't try to change anything--they just want to be there with you for whatever it takes. It humbles me to think about how many times I knew other people who had cancer or other illnesses and I simply said, I hope you feel better soon. Compassionate people know that they can't change it but want you to know they are there for you. Often these are people who have suffered in their own way.

It's a lesson I will need to take to heart. Tuesday will mark Nick and my 30th year together. I need to gather in all I learned about compassion as Nick and I go into the next decade. I know that Nick is trying his very best to do the right things for us. But the dementia is taking a toll. My brother and his wife were in from Phoenix for several days this past week. We had a wonderful time and as we sent them off, Nick asked "who was that"? Fortunately, Nick's compassion and social kindness come from deep in his DNA. So, even though he didn't know who they were; he was kind. That gives me lots of encouragement... and sets a higher goal for me as well.

Thank you all for your support.

Hugs,

John