Just Another Day With Lupus Guilt

by BARBARA LEECH

How to Let Go and Lift Yourself Up

One of the worst aspects of living with lupus can be the guilt that forms inside you because you are never carefree. You are no longer the person you once were, no matter how much you try to put on a happy face and pretend that you are.

You are now someone who has physical complaints every single day, whether you verbalize them or not. When your everyday health is replaced by pain and ongoing battles for your life, complaints escape you far more often than you ever imagined possible.

It happens to the best of us. You hear yourself and think, “There I go again. How do they stand listening to me?”

And our spouses or significant others, our parents and friends all bear the brunt of those complaints and eventually experience a feeling of loss too. Things have been changed by this disease.

I realize this, and every time I complain, even when I have been asked about how I am feeling (a justified time to complain!) I feel guilty. Sometimes I lie and say I am fine, just so I do not hear myself list off what I am experiencing within my body, heart and soul.

I feel I must hide at least some of the suffering because it is just too much for others to take in. I figure if it is overwhelming me, surely they feel similar and maybe they will start to avoid being with me.

But, I also have learned that I deserve better than that. Thankfully I have people who tell me every day not to feel guilty.

Some Encouraging Thoughts to Help with Lupus Guilt

Here are some reminders for you as you sit there on the brink of a guilty bout of self-loathing, one not deserved nor asked for:

- **Having lupus is not your fault.** You did nothing to cause this. This is not karma or the fact that you consume too many soft drinks (though I do find that they exacerbate lupus flares and you should wean yourself off of them). This happened because this disease exists, as do you, and life is filled with challenging and often painful things that we must go through. Do not blame yourself.
- **You are worthy of care and concern.** Accept love and compassion from those who care enough to ask you how you are. Don’t push love away. You deserve it (care, sympathy and help) without feeling any guilt.

- **Do not let others make you feel like you should never complain or that lupus is not a big deal.** If they were to change places with you for a day their opinion would probably be very different. Accept that

they don’t understand and let it go.
- **Find your faith.** Whatever your religious or spiritual beliefs, I fully believe that part of this battle is a lesson. I rely on my faith that this is part of my journey and I have the strength to make it through. I pray. I vent and ask for peace. Do what is in your heart to help yourself let go of the guilt and focus on what matters.

If you find yourself feeling alone, overwhelmed and depressed, please seek help. Join a support group, call a friend who lets you vent judgment-free, reach out to fellow lupies online or talk with a qualified therapist.

Let go of the guilt that comes with this disease. It does not serve you and you did nothing to deserve it. Let it go.