



Courage
By Jo Ivie

It takes courage to live with a chronic illness.

It takes courage to be a prisoner in your own body.

It takes courage to know that what you have isn't a cold or flu that has an expiration date. It takes courage to go to sleep at night knowing this nightmare won't end upon waking.

It takes courage to get out of bed in the morning not knowing how sick you'll be that day.

It takes courage to make plans you'll probably have to cancel and you hate doing that to people.

It takes courage to watch other people's lives go on when yours feels stuck, like it stopped on the day you got sick.

It takes courage to stand when you're afraid of falling.

It takes courage to rest when you've been resting most of your life.

It takes courage to talk when you have brain fog and you can't find words or remember names.

It takes courage to do things when you know you'll "pay" for it later.

It takes courage to go places when you fear you won't have the strength to drive home.

It takes courage to smile when you're in pain and scared.

It takes courage to go through crashes and flares when you don't know if it will last days, weeks, or months.

It takes courage to live everyday in limbo and every hour in question marks.

It takes courage to live with daily pain that you find yourself silently begging to stop. Even just a small break?

It takes courage to go through another day of crushing fatigue that feels like walking through a swimming pool of molasses with weights tied to all four extremities.

It takes courage to say no when you don't want to but know you need to protect your health.

It takes courage when a storm comes through and it feels like a slab of cement has landed on you and flattened you like a pancake.

As rain falls down from the sky, tears fall down my face and I wonder if God is crying with me?

It takes courage to face another domino falling, another piece of your health failing.

It takes courage when your social life centers on doctor's appointments.

It takes courage to try a new treatment when you know your body is extra sensitive.

It takes courage to look in the mirror and not recognize yourself.

It takes courage to see your outward and inward scars as battle wounds and triumphs!

It takes courage to not focus on the deep sorrow, anger, fear, anxiety, unfairness and extreme loss.

It takes courage to hold on
and fight.

It takes courage to let go.

It takes courage to not surrender but
rather accept.

It takes courage to not live in guilt and
shame.

It takes courage to ask for and accept help when you'd much rather be the one
helping. It takes courage to wipe away tears knowing more will come.

It takes courage to realize how little control you really have over your life when you have
an incurable disease.

It takes courage to differentiate between your body and the disease...To not hate your body,
but acknowledge that your body is on your side, amazing, and fighting for you!

It takes courage to DREAM when your life looks nothing like you dreamed it would be.

It takes courage to choose HOPE for the future when the past has been decades of disappointment and suffering.

It takes courage to CELEBRATE the small victories.

It takes courage to feel JOY in the simple things.

It takes courage to listen for the bird's song, to touch the petal of a beautiful flower, to look up at the leaves at the top of the tall trees and let that be enough.

So no matter how you feel today fellow Chronic Illness Warriors, know this... You Are Courageous!