



## *Opinion Article*

# **HIV / AIDS Messages**

**Whitehead-Brice, Miriam\***

Founder of the SYSTEM (Share Your Story To Empower Many), 6735 Brookmont Drive, United States

\*Corresponding e-mail: [System.mwb@gmail.com](mailto:System.mwb@gmail.com)

### **WOMAN OF VICTORY**

Being stigmatized and ostracized, through my eyes see what I have seen. Being labeled dirty and irresponsible; is it possible to be hopeful in a world that constantly throws stones? You pretend to be prayerful with those masks and gloves on! Are you scared of me? Does my particular situation cause your mind to roam? Guess what, in all actuality, reality, has hit home. Infected and affected you cannot ignore the pain. Homosexual or Heterosexual it is not prejudice and you cannot escape the stain.

I was categorized as a statistic and numbered as a loss. I have been treated less than standard and ignored like a second thought. The strength of my self-worth cannot be measured or barcoded. The difference in my life has been turned into a testimony. Depression is behind me, the closet door is open. This child of God is no longer a facade; the spirit of fear has been broken.

I'm suited up for a battle that does not involve flesh and blood. As my soul lies in this bed of clay I am victorious and believe me I am good. God is not through with me yet. I am still here for a reason, living in my season, and passing this message to another; There is "Life After Diagnoses" and do not accept the scarlet letter. Lean on His everlasting arms and step out on faith. Recognize your support system and know that deliverance brings difference.

I have risen to the occasion of His Internal Vision in me. I am focused on that relationship. As for the world's notions, well, that is a distraction, "And I Don't Surrender, to it.

### **LIFE AFTER DIAGNOSIS**

I assumed that I was excused from any disease. I assumed that what looked good on the outside came disease free. I did not contemplate my future or plans. I laid down and became one with a man. The goals of the war in bed was reached. As he peaked so did I but, there was a foul in that breach. How could some use

my love as a territorial threat? How could someone hover over me and attempt to input death?

This was my fault although it takes two. I consented in that moment as I broke free of my rules. What love is to me and what love meant, then, was two different things. Loneliness occupied my space. Depression was the headboard connected to the low self-esteem mattress. The silhouettes on the walls mimicked the deception that plucked my emotions like an out of tune violin. This was not a relationship nor, was it a one-night-stand. This was the answer to my solitude; a deserted woman seeking only the figure of a man.

Lying as I said thank you I carried a piece of him with me as I left that next morning. Time was not kind and my immune system was damaged without a warning. This disease cowered in one place as it multiplied freely. It attached itself to my CD4 Soldiers rudely, greedily, and needy.

Opportunistic infections gained my attention of my body. Testing for HIV or AIDS was never thought of by some Doctors. My appearance made an announcement when I walked into a room. No one noticed my imperfections, flaws, blemishes, or doom. My courteous speech, humor, and style was a mask waiting to be revealed. One doctor took notice and my defects were no longer masked or concealed.

This quiet killer that made loud sounds was debilitating, humiliating, and a force to be reckoned with. I was almost AIDS defied with thoughts of losing my mind as an everyday pill became a regiment. My Husband was tested and still today he is HIV negative. I've concluded that there is "Life After Diagnosis." My acronym for AIDS is "And I Don't Surrender." So, I will not surrender to HIV, fibromyalgia, degenerative disc disease, and bipolar disorders. I will not surrender to any of the thirteen surgeries and the four more on back order. I will not surrender to insecurities, dysfunctions, stigmas and judgments. I refuse to surrender to my mistakes, mishaps, and verbal blunders. I choose

happiness over sad. I will be motivated for that someone who thinks HIV/AIDS means they will not last.

### **WHY CHANCE IT?**

I'm no longer living careless treating life as the wind; or wandering to and fro giving my life to him, it, and them. I've was struck by the results of mythical thinking: "I'm Superman, I'm Wonder Woman; I'm the clock that will keep on ticking."

Now, quarantined by stigma, because of living life "Las Vegas" style; taking chances and just giving condoms small glances. You see, celibacy was not on my mind. I treated my body like a game of roulette. It was also like sticking my hand in a bad magician's hat. I'm carrying a treasure unaware of its measure because, I've just got my mind on some right now, pleasure. Not knowing the outcome, ignorant of the pre-cum, Wow, if I had just used a condom!

I shared untamed fluids with goals of no boundaries, rushing the introduction of, "slow death meet ovaries." I had the mindset of; it won't happen to me, because of the color of my skin, my sexual preference, or just this one time, -again.

Now that I've arrived with HIV in my medical folder, I've got to tell the next person and as I share I become bolder. I didn't think I was going to make it at first, acceptance was a battle but, I paused for a moment and Jesus said, "this, you can handle!"

Little girl, young man, teenager, adult, and seniors, change your methods of thinking and change your modes of tolerance. I challenge you to open your mind to self-accountability. Think of yourself and love yourself. Respect starts with self-commitment. *HIV won't defeat me, And I Don't Surrender to stigmas and judgments!*