

In today's world, we often get caught up in the politics of it all. The politics are important - they shape the future of our country and our world, however we must not miss the most important pieces of society as a whole.

What built this country and the communities within were the hard work, dedication and compassion that we have for one another. Our family and our neighbor. During these hard economic times we see a lot of financial devastation and it is hard. It is hard to see the father of a young family lose a job that provided not only an income but the security of health insurance. It is difficult to see or be one that has worked and saved all of your life and have your financial stability cut in half, if not more. But, you see - many things happen in our lives that are out of our control and it is where you have placed your priorities that make all the difference in the world.

The foundation of our lives is not in money, it is in our family, our neighbor and our community of friends that we have built around us. When you find yourself in the spiral of concern and worry about all that is happening in our world, JUMP UP! STAND UP! DO SOMETHING! What you can do will surprise you. You can't, most likely, fix the economy (if you can, give me a call HA!). What you can do, is pull a little closer to your family, reach out to that neighbor in need. Smile at someone in the grocery store, they may just have less than you. Giving and charity and reaching out to others come from the heart, not the checkbook and it comes in all shapes and colors.

Charity is a good laugh about a wonderful memory, it is pulling together three for a job that may only need one - but three is kind of nice and it makes the job less daunting. It is turning the music a little louder, taking a deep breath and saying, "I am still alive". It is morning coffee with a friend, lunch with grandparent, and afternoon conversations with your dad about then, now and the future. Entertainment does not need to be fancy cars, big homes and all that the media feeds us - entertainment is us - I assure you after meeting people throughout the world... human beings are the most entertaining things on the earth! ha.

Now, in order to do any of this - you also need to do for yourself. Go find that song that use to make you feel ALIVE back in the day - CRANK IT! Go find a fresh cut flower that the aroma reminds you a grandparent since past and remember the first time you smelled that with her. Take a walk where you use to play as a child, if you can and if you can't - your mind and memory is a beautiful thing.

The first thing I thought of, recently, after I was prescribed additional medication to help lift the darkness and counteract the demons in my mind was, "MY GOD - I ACTUALLY HAVE A CHOICE AS TO HOW I FEEL TODAY! I CAN CHOOSE TO BE POSITIVE, I CAN CHOOSE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE AND OTHERS, I HAVE A CHOICE!" If you have been blessed with the natural ability to control your moods and change your attitude, then do it! You are truly blessed with this - a mind that can decide, NO - I CHOOSE to look at the brighter side, I CHOOSE to find solutions not problems and I CHOOSE to not complain, but to contribute. The world is full of devastation - much more than most of us can imagine - I CHOOSE to look at this as an opportunity, not a dismal unchangeable sentence to a collapsing world and then sit back in misery and watch it explode!

Today, I am alive - tomorrow maybe not, but for today, I am alive and I know regardless of my position in life - so many are so worse off than I. I do not live in guilt with that, I live in the awareness that I have the opportunity to share the most important commodity I have and that is I. So, I will smile and say with a genuine heart, "Hello, have a wonderful day" to someone who's life is not so wonderful. I will breathe in the air and say, "thank you". I will respond to a friend with appreciation, gratitude and encouragement for their life and the impact they have had on me and the impact I can have on them. I will not just look at my parents; I will absorb them so that I will have them forever. I will smell the lilacs and I will remember my grandma and the safety, security and love she always gave me. Today, I have a choice as to how I look at the world, my world - one week ago; I did not have that choice.

We all have our obstacles, our mistakes and our problems - but if you can wake up, stand up and say, "I am alive" then you can do something about it all - it does start with you. Treat yourself well, reach out to someone else and every single minute of your day reflect on how grateful you are for all that you DO have. Concentrating on what you do NOT have will only bring more of it into your life.

BE ALIVE!

Being alive today, I will sign this Cory because for ten years I had only an alter ego that is now named Harrison that could BE ALIVE and for once in a very very long time - I can breathe!

Absorb your life today and you will have it for tomorrow! Contribute don't complain! For all of those with mental illness... it is within you, it is there, know that - there is a long road ahead but it does not have to be the same road

we have taken. I have absorbed life and I cannot forget where it is I have been - I will always know where we stand when we are sick but I will not give up until we get the help we need. I have no idea how - but I won't give up on the effort - you are my purpose, my heart and soul and I cannot help myself without helping you. I have watched you and felt you shackled and chained, raped and assaulted, bruised and battered, overmedicated and the subject of crude and vulgar slang insults. Hold on, hold on with all that you have - there is hope, there are people who care.

Cory