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Exactly 57 years ago in 1957 – a weird anniversary to remember

Monday, October 20, 2014

When I noticed the date this morning, I had an odd feeling that it was significant. October 20th? What was special about that? Then I remembered.

It was a Sunday morning and I was spending the weekend with my parents in a small town in PA, visiting my grandmother. I woke up with a horrible pain in my side. I couldn't even sit up.

When it didn't improve, we drove to the hospital in the next town. I was admitted and after some blood work, prepped for surgery – "acute appendicitis."

I was 10 years old and really scared, more than most kids because "appendicitis" was a fearful word in our family.

My mother's brother had died at age 13 when his appendix ruptured and my mother almost died at age 8 when the same thing happened to her.

Of course, this was nearly 30 years later and we had antibiotics now, but that fact was lost on my 10 year old mind.

Then a remarkable coincidence! We met the surgeon and my Dad recognized him. They had served together on a ship during WWII and Dr. Ryan had operated on my father. "Don't worry," Dad said, "You're in good hands." With that reassurance I felt better.

Obviously, things turned out all right except for one thing.

October 1957 – The Asian Flu Epidemic. The next day the hospital was quarantined – NO VISITORS. I was alone for one week, no TV, nothing but my own thoughts and trying to pretend I was brave. I trace my lifelong anxiety about medical things to that week.

It's important to understand how events make us who and what we are. It's the first step to overcoming bad stuff, putting it aside and moving on. Still our subconscious brings it to the surface when you least expect it.

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GIVEUP30



WOW!!! you were lucky when I was taken to the doctor at 13 years doctor mother it was the time of month starting just give her aspirin after two days mother called and say she can't keep any thing down still. Give her model samewait it was tylenol second....never ever being sick when my dad came home after a week of not being able to move he stood at my bedroom door and say sis how are you and I said very low voice not good daddy...he said get up I 'm taking you to the doctor myself and he is going to fine something else for you have never been sick since I have been you dad.....was told at age ten bio dad tried to sell me and mother got divorced.....anyway got to doctors and couldn't get up on the bed without help....one touch and look he called dad in and said have to call ambulance dad said can I GET her there faster.....he did and I made it into surgery the doctor said after the surgery they would of been pop within an hour.

the sad part of this all is my hubby mother had a brother born when my hubby was and he died when he was 18 they didn't know stomachache back then could be appendix . My hubby was named after him and ever time we had a family get together I WAS reminded of the brother and my hubby being born same and being named after brother. after a year of being remind I was married to a corpse I told my hubby what was being said and I can't go to Any more family outings.....He had to of said something for he got me to go again and nothing was said. I'm sorry if that sounds bad not to hear the same thing over and over again but my hbby was very much alive and I was starting to have a problem being near him.

It will be 53 years this thanksgiving. His parents and relatives were very nice people.

I have always loved sports growing up and continued then with out boys. Still going.....you just



keep
2422 days ago



PHEBESS



You had every reason to be scared, and to still feel repercussions of that incident. And yes, hugs to your little 10 yr old self!

2424 days ago



SPARKNB



I had a compound fracture when I jumped off a havy coffee table, which then hit my arm. Yep repercussions....

2425 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM



Fascinating. And great insight now, over the years. Wisdom does come, doesn't it?

Fortunately, you have a fine mind, and are working your way through what you know is going on in it.

2426 days ago



TERI-RIFIC



Interesting. During WWII they sent children away from their parents in London to keep them safe. It turns out that did a lot of psychological damage. The man who pioneered attachment theory, John Bowlby, was one of those children.

2426 days ago



SUBMOM2



That must have been scary! If you find yourself feeling some medical-related anxiety, think of all the things you do to keep yourself healthy. Glad you are here to tell the tale!

2426 days ago



GINIEMIE



My sister had her appendix out when she was 6 after a little classmate had died from a ruptured appendix a week earlier-tense moment for our family.

I think 1957 was hard on a lot of people, one of my brother's the one born in 1956 had the asian flu and ended up not walking or talking again for another 8 months. That was one nasty strain.

I feel for you just a kid, getting shut up in the hospital with no family. That was traumatic. You are so right, some things that happen to us when we are young haunt us for much of our lives and sometimes we cannot even trace what causes our reactions. I'm glad that medicine has advanced so we don't lose so many to appendicitis although I nearly had a ruptured one in 1972. The doctor couldn't figure out what was wrong with me 5+ weeks after I gave birth to my second child-I was rushed to emergency to find out it was a good thing my DH refused to take me back home until the doctor could figure out what was ailing me....

Wow did you open my memory banks today Elaine!



2426 days ago



DOVESEYES



That is so true thanks for sharing.

2426 days ago

**BOOKAPHILE**

It's nice to look back and see improvements in how things are handled...especially with kids!
2426 days ago

**MARYJEANSL**


That is a good insight to have. Funnily enough, it struck a chord with me for a different reason. My dearly loved older sister was born in October of 1957. Not on the 20th, but in October. And she would have been 57 this month if she had lived. Tragically, she died when she was only 34 - not from appendicitis, but from cancer. But you brought her memory back to my mind and made me smile. I wish she were still with us, but time has softened the loss and I remember good things now when I think of her.
2426 days ago

**MJREIMERS**

You have a good memory, but those "traumatic" events seems to stick with us. I was much older when I had my appendix out. I can't imagine being a little one.

I love your last paragraph. I think we forget that EVERYTHING in life makes us who we are today. Wow, is all I can say!
2426 days ago

**KRISZTA11**

 to your 10-year old self!
2426 days ago

**SMOKY_TEA**

What a powerful memory. You have done a fantastic job in surviving that time period and in allowing the date to remain in your memory as a keystone of sorts. It is great that you had the tenacity to survive and also the memory to trace how 1957 affects your emotions today.

50 years ago I was in a hospital and recall it vividly. As Shakespeare says, "The past is prologue" and I know how much it affects us, even if we have a completely logical intellectual understanding of what happened.

2426 days ago

**WATERMELLEN**

So glad you made it!! I remember a similar hospitalization from age four -- very scary for me too (parents did not stay with kids at hospital in that era).

It helps to recognize the experiences which have shaped us.
2426 days ago

**DDOORN**

Impressive memory! I have very poor recall of specific events, circumstances and muddle along as best I can without this valuable skill.

Don
2426 days ago

**DR1939**

Very scary for a child.
2426 days ago

**SWEDE_SU**

it is indeed important to remember what makes us who we are - thank you for sharing!
2426 days ago

**LINDAKAY228**

Glad you got your appendix out okay in spite of the epidemic! I had mine out when I was about 8 years old in a small hospital in a rural town we lived in. I remember that there was a tv in a small tv room but none in individual rooms to watch! Funny thing to remember and one of the few things about that particular time. That and the fact we had fried bologna with eggs!
2426 days ago

**MJZHERE**

Strange how the past just seems to pop up sometimes. I agree - it is important to not just push it down but learn and adjust accordingly.
2426 days ago

**IFDEEVARUNS2**

I remember that epidemic, and being quarantined at home. I got sick at the end of that period. And then there was the scarlet fever. Scary times.





2426 days ago



WELLBEING67

V

Events, especially childhood ones, do have a profound effect. When I was 11, my grandfather had a sudden, totally unexpected, fatal heart attack. He and my grandmother were 2 hours away from home at their hunting cabin in northern PA. When my grandmother called us, I answered the telephone. She was hysterical and I didn't even know who she was as she asked to speak to my dad. No one was in the house except me - on a farm the folks could have been in the back 40 or out in the barn at the time but no one heard me shouting for them. I've never felt so helpless. After that I would not answer the telephone unless some one was in the house with me. I do answer the phone now, but I refuse to carry a cell phone and I think the part of the reason is because of that day. Not a happy memory but thank you for helping me make the connection.

2426 days ago



CD4114015

V

OH my goodness! SO glad it went well. When I read this, it rattled me...I had my appendix out when I was 9 which means 1957!!!! Not sure of the month but think it was more like summer. But that WAS a scary thing back then. Do you remember that back then all pre-surgeries got an enema? Well, I did but NO ONE explained it and I thought my insides were coming out! I cried and one nice nurse came and explained that was how it WAS.

Your last paragraph is so true, "It's important to understand how events make us who and what we are."

**THANK
YOU!**

2426 days ago

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