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Stress, Solitude, and Being Single

Spiritual Musings from a 30-something Woman During Covid-19

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My Living Room



December 2018, that's when I noticed it.

'It' was Telogen Effluvium, a stress-induced, temporary hair loss. I consumed everything available, wanting to support regrowth and not let the stress of the loss exacerbate the issue.

I've been through enough traumatic situations in my life to see the value in a spiritual and self-care toolbox to support my well-being during periods of anxiety or depression.

- Energy work, affirmations, breath-work, meditation
- Epsom salt baths, moving my body, supplements
- Listening to music, dancing
- Creative pursuits; cooking and painting
- Mindful Meals; sit at the table, not in front of the telly
- Craniosacral therapy and bodywork

My toolbox wasn't ready for this. I stopped using styling products and let my hair air dry after every wash which I reduced to twice a week. Seeing so many strands fall during a shampoo was taxing. Brushing was reduced to a minimum for similar reasons.

My hair now mirrored my soul; wild.

I discovered I associated my identity and femininity with *having* hair. It wasn't a length issue; I'd cut it short many times. I just deeply wanted to *have it*. Even though it's a common and more socially acceptable thing, it birthed empathy and curiosity for men who experience premature hair loss.

At its peak, the thickness was reduced by 40%.

By August of 2019 it stopped. Gratitude overflowed.

Then Covid-19 arrived.

I thought I was handling the pandemic rather well.

The tumbleweed of hair forming on my desk as I type this, tells me my body disagrees.

Specialists advise finding the root cause of the trigger and alleviating it to expedite healing. Let's make a list, shall we?

- It's not Taurus season yet, but it is pandemic season. No clear end in sight, and the normal life we once took for granted will unlikely return. *This is change management on a worldwide scale. A key to doing it well, is to inspire confidence in what will remain the same. Stability is good for the mind, unfortunately we don't have that right now.*
- Loved ones putting non-essentials ahead of their health and safety. *They are allowed to make their own choices, and I'm allowed to feel how I feel. Neat, huh?*
- Here in the States, an election year is showing us just how polarized in ideologies and values this country has become. *Black and white thinking, arguments, and victim culture abound.*
- I am a sole proprietor of an LLC that has seen a major loss in revenue due to stay-at-home orders. *Without knowing our future, I don't know when I can reschedule training classes and a women's retreat to Hawaii.*
- I've been turned down for grants, and the money from the CARES ACT seems to be drying up.

- Finally, I'm 37, single, don't have a strong social network locally, and haven't been touched since March 2nd.

It was a hug from acquaintances at a networking lunch during Boston's Restaurant Week. I can still smell the browned-butter sauce on top of the steak. It sizzled loudly when they brought it to our table. We all got quiet, eyes wide with anticipation, mouths watering.

Earlier this month, a painful thought washed over me, "I don't know when I'll be touched again."

I moved to Boston two and a half years ago. Relocating in your mid-30's takes guts, so I've been told. Relocating is the easy part, it's putting yourself out there again and again to make friends that takes guts.

I have a home office, and I live alone; unless you count my seven plants. I haven't resorted to giving them names à la 'Wilson', so I won't count them. Yet.

Some days it feels like nothing is different; I'm inspired, motivated, excited about what's possible. Other days, I've felt like I was going to crawl out of my skin, was on the brink of tears, and drained my phone battery lightning fast bouncing from app to app.

A byproduct and gift from self isolation, I've learned I'm craving connection, intimacy, and companionship at a new level.

Years ago, standing on a rocky Bahamian cove at night, looking out on the water, I curtly told him, "I'm not comfortable being touched" and pivoted my step to maintain a safe distance. The chemistry was there, and it terrified me. I was still healing from a learned belief that romantic relationships weren't safe.

Ironically, I twisted my ankle and stumbled. While respecting my boundary, he responded quickly and was prepared to assist should I reach out to him to prevent myself from falling.

I'll always be grateful to him. Not just for that moment. But for all the following moments. He gifted me safety and freedom, opening my heart to love.

I'm lost in memories, then the hairs fall with no one to see them but me.

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Jen Moff is a transformational speaker, and the CEO of Magical Mindfulness LLC, a coaching and consulting firm specializing in leadership consulting for rapidly growing startups, transformational experiential retreats, as well as spiritually-based relationship coaching for women.

Less sugar and more spice, Jen is a former actor with on-point comedic timing. Those skills, along with her ability to apply fresh concepts with tactical tools, make her a hit with audiences — during workshops, keynotes, or breakout sessions.

Her areas of expertise include the intersections of leadership and consciousness, online entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as relationships and spiritual growth. Jen has a BFA in Communication and Public Relations. She also received a Certified Relationship Specialist designation by the American Psychotherapy Association and is certified in the Sacred DNA Restructure Method. Jen is a member of the Women's Speakers Association and Innovation Women Speakers Bureau, released *Mindfulness 1.0* on iTunes, is the author of the *Mindful Life Map*, available on Amazon, and recently released the *M-Pact Planner*.

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