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“MS has really brought home to me the fact that you never really own anything--not your looks, your talents, your brains, your money. It's all on loan...”

**Emily West, St. Paul, MN.**



I've had my MS symptoms (vertigo, tingling, numbness) off and on since 1987, but no one ever took them very seriously (including me). I was always the person who caught every illness, with migraines and asthma, so I always just assumed I needed to eat better and exercise more. And I worked really hard at that. But no matter what I did, I always had sore muscles, and I always needed way more sleep than anyone else. When a doctor finally took my vertigo complaints seriously, and the MRI showed brain lesions, it was almost a relief for me to know there was a reason why I was always kind of feeble. No one wants MS, but if you have to have something I think it's actually a better deal than my father's juvenile diabetes or my husband's ulcerative colitis, or my sister's fatal brain cancer. At least I can hold on to some hope that it will be a long road downhill. I feel really lucky that I managed to put so much effort into

improving my health before I found out. I've had to give up driving because of the vertigo, but I still go indoor rock climbing twice a week, ride my bike, and ski, and I just got a kayak for Christmas. I'm just a little more careful now. I also appreciate the fact that MS has really brought home to me the fact that you never really "own" anything--not your looks, your talents, your brains, your money. It's all on loan, and you can lose it when you least expect it. The only thing that never goes away is the good you were able to do for other people.