

## Nicole's Story

**Nicole:** My name is Nicole and in 2008 I was diagnosed with lupus.

Prior to my diagnosis of lupus I was a really active person. I worked 50, 60, 70 hours a week in a job that I enjoyed. I like to go out a lot and go bowling, go partying, hanging out with friends and dancing. I was a very active person.

Leading up to my diagnosis was very interesting. I got the flu, and I just didn't seem to get any better so I went to a couple of doctors. And it was the rheumatologist after a period of a few weeks and quite a lot of tests who diagnosed me with lupus.

I am married and my husband's family, it was a lot for them to deal with it. For Thanksgiving, for example, the day before we were supposed to drive down I just came out with an awful flare. And so we had to call and cancel Thanksgiving.

It was just kind of hard for them to understand. And they think, maybe you just don't want to visit. But that really wasn't the case. It was just...I wasn't physically able to do it.

And, you know, sometimes they make special accommodations...one time my mother-in-law actually gave us her bed so that I could sleep downstairs. So slowly but surely, they're understanding how this disease impacts me in little small ways; so maybe understanding and acceptance comes with time and learning about what's going on.

I'm pretty honest with people when it comes to communicating my lupus. I'm not going to say the car broke down, you know, and use that as an excuse. I'm not ashamed of being sick or embarrassed of being sick.

I'm starting a new job actually this week which is going to be a work-at-home position. And I'm a little nervous because I'm a people person and I derive my energy from people...And it's not really the career path that I would have chosen for myself but it is a good compromise. I'm still going to have a good life and I'm going to still do good things with it.

When I was diagnosed two and half years ago with lupus, my husband was hit the hardest. He's been there and helping me out and every moment we make sure that we're happy, and we're together, and we take advantage of each other. And really since the diagnosis of lupus the relationship has just deepened and I couldn't imagine living without him.

Me and my husband think that we would make wonderful parents, so we've been discussing this and we're going to look at fostering and adopting. We really have a lot of love to give and I just really would like to raise some children in this world.

When I was diagnosed with lupus, a lot of things changed and one of them was my attitude. I realized that life is short and you have to be positive, and sometimes when you have a disease like lupus you forget that and you think that you can't do anything, and you get really depressed. And physically that affects you. So you really have to think positive and grab that positive energy.

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