

## Why Not Me? Reflections on The Traveler's Gift

In Andy Andrews' excellent book *The Traveler's Gift*, the traveler of the title, David Ponder, finds himself in horrible circumstances and asks, "Why me?"

He is asked, in return, "Why not you?"

Looking at things from the point of view that all of life is creative fodder, I am well able to understand how even David Ponder's situation could be used for good.

I'm not so able to understand the same thing about my own circumstances much of the time.

I like to whine at times about having a mental illness. It's a great opportunity for whining. When I have a bad manic episode, I've been known to say, "Sometimes I really hate my life." But I don't. Not really.

Why Me?

First, why not me, as David Ponder was asked. What makes me "special"? Why shouldn't I have a burden to bear? Everyone else does. And why should it be any different than it is? Everyone has what they have to bear. That's what we're given. Every one of us.

But more. Why me?

Because I'm strong and adversity only makes me stronger. Some people could not live with my problems. I couldn't live with some of theirs.

Why me?

Because I can take it.

Why me?

Because I have a lesson to learn about mental illness, compassion and forgiveness. Because I grew up with a mentally ill father and I still have to let go of my anger, fear and yes, hatred.

Why me?

Because I have a legacy to learn to live with.

But why me?

Because I have children who need a strong, understanding mom. Because when they go through trying times, they need to believe I know what it's like to go through the worst time of your life and come out breathing.

Why me?

Because I'm a beacon in their storms.

Still, why me?

Ironically, because I love to learn, and anything that helps me learn, I can accept, even learn to appreciate. Living with any chronic illness is a learning experience, and perhaps the most important, and rewarding, I'll ever have.

Why me, though?

What did I do to deserve this? It took me ten years to realize the answer. Nothing. I don't "deserve" it, it just is. I just am.

So why me?

Because I love to talk, and I love to teach, and I'm not afraid to share my experience with this illness.

Why me?

Because I have a big heart and a bigger mouth and I'm an amazing advocate.

I've learned, and some of this I've learned from Andrews and The Traveler's Gift, that "why me?" gets me nowhere.

It is me. It is mine. I'm the one facing this situation. The grownups are not riding to the rescue. I am the grownups. That's the bad news, I guess. The good news is that when I take my energy back from "why me," I can focus on dealing with reality.

Why me?

Who knows? Why not me is as good an answer as many, better than most.

And, whether I know why or not, it is me. I have to accept that and move on, carrying my burden.

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#### About the Author

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