

Holidays

It's the holiday season again. Sinterklaas, Christmas, New Year's Eve. Happy days with friends and family. But also means days that highlight my health issues.

It starts with the Christmas cards: "A happy and healthy 2021". I have sent texts like this in the past, but only now I fully feel and appreciate the meaning.

What is a healthy 2021? In some ways I feel healthy. I exercise, I eat healthy, only drink a little alcohol and I don't smoke. But then of course there is my MPN and the leak in my meninges. These are serious conditions, so I am not really healthy.

What does such a text really mean? The sender probably hardly thought about it. Everyone receives the same text. On the other hand, the intention is lovely. A big wish, actually. And wishing is always allowed, even if they might not be realistic. I choose to accept the lovely intent, and I push the sadness that the text evokes into the background.

Then there are the special days themselves: Sinterklaas Eve, Christmas Dinner, New Year's Eve. What a drain they are! As fun and enjoyable as these evenings are, they take a lot of energy.

The preparations are also intensive. Buying gifts, making Sinterklaas 'surprises' and poems, shopping and cooking or traveling for Christmas dinner, keeping my eyes open until after midnight to toast to a new year. Do I go to bed relatively early as I normally would and then get up (with a lot of) effort for a glass of champagne and the fireworks?

It is a disruption to my daily rhythm and therefore guarantees 'punishment'. Days 'extra rest'... More pain, more tiredness... Yes, I do still choose to do all these things, despite the consequences, but I am also relieved when the holidays are over and I can return to my regular routine. That is when I feel at my best, but at times like this, it is still at times difficult to accept my limitations.

Despite everything I enjoy the company of the people I love. I enjoy the experience. I enjoy having wishes and dreams for the New Year.

I wish you all a happy and (as) healthy (as possible) 2021!

Emilie, December 2020