

"Do you have a DNR?" my hospital doctor nonchalantly asks me as I lie in the ER awaiting a hospital bed. The feeling was quite different when my husband and I filled out that paperwork as part of our will making. At that point, it was so abstract. Now, the notion of my mortality is too real to fathom.

As the doctor describes the process that I can be subjected to, should I not invoke my DNR, my squeamishness surfaces. He's talking to someone who asks for a kid's band-aid whenever I get a shot, whose children called their father whenever they needed medical care. TMI, as they would say. Certainly I don't want to be kept on life support if my body fails me. But I'm also nowhere near ready to die. Am I? The red DNR band joins the others on my wrist.

The capacity to weather a disturbance without loss is defined as **resistance**; whereas **resilience** is the capacity to recover from a disturbance.

I've always been better at resistance than resilience.

Some things now must change.

Five days earlier, three days before our 46th wedding anniversary, after dropping a glass, falling out of bed, and feeling frightened and disoriented, I get back into bed and go to sleep. My husband diagnoses vestibular syndrome, a condition he often sees in animals. Sounds harmless to me. I awake to make a meal for dear friends we've promised to visit in the evening. I alter the menu, not feeling well enough to make anything too complicated.

I finally go to my doctor on Monday morning and she, unlike my husband and I, has a different explanation for what had occurred. "You need to have an MRI. This looks like a stroke." The next evening, the MRI completed, the technician says my doctor is on the phone. "The neurologist confirms that you've had a stroke. You must go to the ER and be admitted to the hospital." Palpable fear fills me.

My hospital stay, the resulting battery of tests, and new medications has altered my life. When my husband, one-year old grandson and daughter visit, my daughter hears my wonderful day nurse tell the night nurse, "She has a DNR." Rachel's our healthcare proxy and certainly knows she'll someday be responsible for making decisions for us if we're unable. Once again, the immediacy of the here and now is so much different than imagining it in a distant future.

Unable to read, despite having brought books and magazines to the hospital, I find myself mentally adjusting to my situation. I recall the 25 years spent as my mother's primary caregiver as she negotiated and changed her life, when

multiple health issues arose. Her resilience, and her resistance become a model of my new reality.

My awareness is undergoing a dramatic change, taking hold despite my attempts at planning. The “little things” are disappearing. I am divesting myself of superfluous issues, activities, and the people in my life whom I don’t “need”. I could describe that I’m becoming more selfish, but maybe that’s not the right adjective? I am aware of needing self-nourishment in ways I haven’t experienced in a long time.

Time is expanding. (That’s interesting!) The immediacy of what life remains for me, whatever amount of time that represents, becomes foremost. There’s an unconscious understanding I can’t verbalize.

I am colossally grateful for my husband and companion of 48 years, conscious of dear friends who offer comfort, doctors who provide relief and answers, my daughter, her husband, and my grandson, my son and his fiancé, and our small extended family.

My resistance interprets this event as an opportunity to reevaluate and reinvent. I invoke resilience, accepting my new status. Change becomes my opportunity. (I never thought I’d say that!)

Resistant resilience is my mantra.