

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



Terribly Exciting
If you could feel the electricity of excitement in my brain right now, you wouldn't be able to sit down. Good excitement, nervous excitement,

dreadful excitement, and a fear of the unknown excitement (also called anxiety.) I believe this is the busiest week physically and emotionally of my life. This week will be the

real test to see if I can still hold it all together.

My sweet little autistic daughter, just 17, will graduate from high school on Friday night. My husband

John, and I, have been busy helping her get all of her paperwork complete and appointments done at Parkland College so she will be ready to go in the fall. She is in the Parkland Pathways program, so she will have dual counsellors, rigid criteria, and MANY logins and passwords to keep track of as she navigates through both Parkland and the U of I together. It's

mind boggling, even for an ole pro like me - MyParkland, MyIllini, MyMcKinley, PCID, UIN, Parkland login, ACES, FAFSA, and so on.

Then of course, there is the end-of-year wrap up at school. Fines to be paid, tests, reports, finals, end of year festivities, and that's not even the weekend yet! Friday night is graduation, where the drumroll start of "Pomp And Circumstance" will flood my soul with emotions and hot tears will rise up in my throat like a knot. I will fight with the urge to take pictures, or just take it all in. I don't think I will be able to swallow all the tears down for this one. Watching Portia graduate is a little extra special to me, because she is extra special.

Saturday will be another emotional roller-coaster as John's family gathers for a barbecue on the 2nd anniversary of his sister Cathy's death. I enjoy getting together with family; it's needful and comforting. It's also still a little too close to when my dad passed away, and my wounds are still fresh. Cathy and my dad both suffered in similar ways. I'm glad that they are finally home in Glory, it's just hard to go through the process of letting go. Being reminded of Cathy's goodbye will certainly bring back some painful memories for me.

Later Saturday afternoon,

we have yet another memorial service to attend, this one for John's uncle Jim who passed away in Texas. He was a good, kind and gentle man of faith. He and his wife, Wilma, have always been a great joy to be around. Sorrow, yet joy; it will be a delight to see all of his children and the other family that will come from miles to attend. Excitement, a mixture of emotions like a tornado made of candy sprinkles. Weird, huh.

Last night at our church Worship Team practice, there were 2 patriotic songs on the playlist for Sunday, and being the drummer, I am responsible for setting the tempo (aka: mood / beat) of the song. Trilling a roll across the snare, the heavy beat of the bass, and the crisp crash of the cymba actually gave me chills up my spine. The words that crossed my lips, "God bless America, land that I love," oh, how I meant them. How I prayed that God restore this country, that it's people would fall to their knees and pray. Tears ran out of the sides of my eyes and dripped down my face. Expectant excitement, with urgency and loyalty. I am grateful to be from the greatest country in the world. I only wish that America would put God first and see the great healing move across this land.

Monday will come. There will be memorial programs at graveyards. Salutes, emblems laid before the unknown soldiers, rifles, shots, hot brass casings falling onto the freshly cut grass. A field full of small American flags waving with the breeze as "Taps" reminds us all of the service men and women who no longer stand beside us, or hold their grandchild's hand. A lump-in-the-throat excitement...a pinwheel in the tummy excitement...an excitement that makes the heart beat double.

Emotions are crazy things. Sometimes we feel such a great rush of emotion we don't quite know exactly what we are feeling. We just feel. It's called being overwhelmed with emotion. Don't try to figure it out. Just take deep breaths, and picture yourself in a hammock on the beach, listening to the waves.

In this world, there is bad news and good news. The bad news; nothing lasts forever. The good news; nothing lasts forever. That should excite you.

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