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**I FEEL  
NUMB**

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# STOP THE STIGMA START TREATMENT

"I haven't been with anyone besides you." He goes on apologizing but I really don't even hear it. This is unbelievable. I'll just pack my things and go. I can't believe he gave me HIV! My phone was ringing all day. I checked my voicemail and had a thousand messages from him!

As I skip through deleting them I hear a message from the Doctors office asking me to come in for treatment. But I FEEL NUMB and don't want to face this right now. I left my boyfriend and went and got my own place.

After a few months, that day seemed to just be a bad dream. I began to go on with my day-to-day as if nothing happened, until I passed out at work one day. I was rushed to the hospital via ambulance. They took me in through the ER and eventually decided to admit me.

After several hours and multiple tests they came back to tell me that my HIV has progressed to an AIDS diagnosis. The doctor came in and asked me if I knew I was HIV positive. I told him yes and that I never got into treatment because I simply didn't want to accept it. I thought if I ate healthy foods and worked out I would stay in good health. He explained to me that although those life practices are good, they are not enough to keep my viral load down. He told me that the medicines have changed and now I may be able to take just one pill to keep me healthy. After some counsel from the doctor I accepted my status and received my treatment.



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