Courage and Confidence with Liver Cancer

February 10, 2016 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog, January 31, 2016

We both look scared. My sweet mama’s nightgown reserved for scary times.

During my battle with liver cancer, I loved reading all of your personal cards, emails, and messages. How could I possibly respond back? (Picture me typing all night.) Instead, I folded strong words into my heart and recited them to me when I needed them. (Daily, hourly) Little love letters. One morning after my liver transplant, while poring over more of your emails and messages, one word kept popping up – Brave. I remember my face felt hot. I didn’t feel brave at all. I was terrified. I needed courage and confidence with liver cancer.

A lot of emotions go through your head when you survive the threat of death. I tried to write a blog about it but my thoughts and feelings got tangled up. I began to notice how frequently we all use battlefield language describing Hepatitis C and other liver ailments. Words like heroic, brave, confident, courage, and warrior are dotted throughout facebook posts about illness, treatments,

and health.

I looked up the definition of the word Confidence. The original latin gives this: With Trust. When the personal living space that your spirit occupies is threatened (Translate: Your body is dying) trust is hard to come by.

I looked at the word Courage. Medieval use implies: With Heart. Brene Brown calls courage, “To speak one’s mind by telling all one’s heart.” Less than being heroic, it is more like telling the truth about what I’m afraid of. I have never felt less like a hero. I’m softer now than at any time in my life. But to be soft and vulnerable takes confidence.

Now that’s a word I have loved ever since watching Julie Andrews swinging a guitar case toward the VonTrapp Family mansion. I have confidence in me! What will this day be like? I wonder. What will my future be? I wonder. The lyrics have always seemed to loan me a confidence when I had none. Not that I’ve ever been the whimpering kind. But I have lacked trust…To read the rest of Karen’s blog, "Courage and Confidence with Liver Cancer," click here. Be sure to read Karen’s favorite song lyrics at the end.

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