



Deep Roots, Living with Hepatitis C

February 2, 2016 By [Matt Starr](#)

What does it mean to be well? For many of us, we consider being well as a physical state. When we are younger or living without chronic pain disease or illness, it means having a strong, graceful body. And yes, being strong and fit is a good thing. It is a narrow definition, however, of what it means to be really well.

We can be physically at our peak, or at least still strong, without truly being well.

I know all about that. Before my hepatitis C became aggressive and led to liver disease and a transplant, I was a recreationally competitive marathoner and racer, and rode century bike rides regularly, along with other challenging physical activities.

But, underneath that physical strength, there were hosts of things impeding my complete wellness, as there was a misalignment of body, mind, and spirit. I had defined myself in an ego-driven way. I had not really faced my fears, the negative events that were part of my growing up.

We all suffer at some level. We bleed. Health, and chronic disease like mine, can cause a hemorrhage. You can bandage the bleeding with work, exercise, new purchases, food, alcohol, drugs, sex - but eventually it will all ooze out and stain your life. We must find the strength to open the wounds, pull out the core of the pain and the memories that hold us in the past, and make peace with them. Then we can grow and heal.

Look to the natural world. Trees. If they are along a windy coast, they might not be as majestic looking as the protected ones inland. But those trees near the shore have the deepest roots. They need them to survive and thrive against the wind. Your storm, like mine, might be battling hepatitis and liver disease.

The winds will come to all of us at some point. When storms enter our lives, we must tap into our deeper roots. When we confront our pain, we have a chance to send our heart-root deeper, and that root can never be deep enough.

If you relate at all to this, then the challenge becomes how to make the changes needed to align and heal from within.

Be aware and mindful of your thoughts and actions, and how you treat others. Love your life as it is, not as it was, as that is a step forward towards peace and health.

Find the time for quiet meditation as a way to relieve pain and to heal.

Eat mindfully as well, so that what you put in contributes to healing, rather than just filling you up. Get out, both to exercise as tolerated, and socialize.

It can be a tough road making changes alone. That's where support systems, like reading these blogs, finding people you can talk to, or hiring a coach, can help you by listening, suggesting, nudging, challenging, and holding you accountable to what you agree to do for yourself.

Be a coastal tree, and send your roots deep. Learn your virus and disease. Aspire to find your most true self. Ask for and get the help you need. Give back what you can.

Dedicate yourself to be open to new ideas with a commitment to make change.

Anything is Possible.

Matt Starr

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