Four Letter words

January 29, 2015 By Rick Nash

(Since it'll be about two weeks until i know more about my viral load, let's continue with some character development.)

My mom failed the first treatment, she had begun her second fight with interferon. Peg- interferon was a welcome change to the predecessor, less injections and a better control of the drugs meant for more promising results. My mom's numbers fluctuated dropping low but never hitting zero. Perhaps I was too excited at the thought of being free of the damning state of mind I'd been in, the idea of freeing both myself and my mom of this was amazing and I jumped at the chance. a small battery of tests gave me the first month's set of drugs. it was delivered on ice and the needles we're the most confusing things I'd ever seen. Instead of prefilled syringes the drug came in a container that was a cross between a Rubik's cube and an epi-pen.

This is what it used to look like:



While this is what it looks like now:



(and now the next gens are just oral pills? damn that's awesome!)

It may not look intimidating, but the instructions looked like that notification from the department of labor in your common space at work.

After a certain degree of shaking lightly or something to that effect, rotating it a certain number of times, and then putting it at a 180 degree angle, you would compress it until the bubble hit the line and magic would happen. My memory denies me the intricacies of the procedure, but It was a rather absurdly elaborate process which simply added more stress to impeding injection.

The treatment's potential success brought me a lot of hope, something I'd been lacking. unfortunately it's failure would only compound my mother's guilt. As the symptoms of a worsening liver coupled with the weird hormone changes I'd felt during treatment began to inhibit my routines I noticed my mom's decay. To me she was a mirror into the future, and it wasn't looking good.

This, I'd realized, was the hard part of having someone walk along the path with you. while we

both understood the pains, the frustration, the depression, it was a double edged sword. Being a vertical transfer meant that I had someone to share this wretched journey with, but it also meant that when both of just were injured on the trail, hope would fade that much more. This is where fear lives. Feeling alone, but knowing you're not. My mother clung to hope, and had a hard time pushing herself. I felt differently. I refused to let go of the hope I'd gained, I pushed myself harder and tried to live as normal as I could. When my mom was floundering I'd remind her that we were in the same boat. My methods involved a lot of yelling when conversations regarding progress would sour. It took another treatment to brighten her spirit. It was by far the hardest on her putting her at near zero for month, and she pushed through it refusing to give up. That same treatment decided to give me a slightly different experience, it brought me close to zero, and then nearly killed me.

At the end of the year HepC still remained in my system. And while my mom managed to cure herself, the other half of her pain, would find some solace in helping me fight my ever worsening state. It is with that sentiment I take on each treatment as much for her, as I do myself. Because the path that we've stumbled along has brought us better to fall together than to fall apart.

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