Worry and Boredom in Hartland

May 21, 2015 By Matt Starr

OK, it's not Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing*, and it's not Las Vegas, but I find myself aching for the leash to be cut and for me to be on the road, searching for my own truth (without the booze and drugs). A little context might help here. I'm taking ribavirin and Harvoni, the newest, most successful treatment yet developed for the insidious hepatitis C virus, with a cure rate of over 90% for my genotype 1. The side effects from ribavirin are fatigue and anemia, which my body has resisted, but is slowly increasing. It's been a month, and right now I don't feel "normal." However, I do feel good enough to entertain the idea of heading south or west with a tent, my dog, and a Coleman stove in tow. Fear and worry, along with family responsibilities, hold me.

The worry is rooted in the fear that on a long trip I might start to feel worse side effects, and without the wonderful local care I get, both from my rock star gastroenterologist and my local holistic clinic, I could be making a mistake. Maybe fear is too strong a word, but it's still a worry that keeps me tethered to home.

Boredom comes in a few forms. I am gardening a lot, spending some consistent time on my yoga mat, and walking the dog in the woods. So, I do have lots to do, along with my writing and attempts to keep Starr Wellness Coach vibrant. However, most if not all of these things I love are done alone.

My active friends and even my dear wife are engaged in an active lifestyle that is too challenging for me right now. I can jog, but not run, and hills on my bike are sluggish at best. The early visitors that came by to play some music and sing, have tea, and go out at night for a movie or a meal, have mostly disappeared. This treatment is six moths long, and it's hard for folks to hang in there all that time, as I seem normal to the casual observer, compared to when my liver flare ups and treatments began. I get it, and it's OK, but it does leave me somewhat empty.

Exercising with me is a test of a person's patience and at this point, nobody asks. My oldest son is in college, and the other is 17 and wants to spend most of his free time with friends, which is completely normal for that age. Even my wife, my partner in all things for over 25 years, is deeply worried about my health and is burdened by what our life was rather than accepting and appreciating what I/we still have. She bikes and runs with others, and needs to do that to release the tension, and I completely understand.

Describing and approaching my fear, worry, and boredom this way is mostly glitter and avoidance, resulting in an unexpected long-winded whine. The real fear, worry and boredom do not involve a missed road trip with speakers blaring, but is more about the core of my healing journey and my cirrhotic liver.

But, when the fear and worry creep in, as it will, then it is most important to stick with the practices and activities that bring me peace rather than feel the boredom of an every day routine.

We face our dark places, and acknowledge them while holding on to the depth of our healing. For me, it is about staying focused on liver friendly foods and sitting quietly with my breath and spirit entities, along with the yoga and all the rest. I put the fear and worry of my disease, and boredom of the day to day, in the back seat while I live as much as possible with gratitude and love.

Adventurous travelling around the world can wait. Right now it's all about the healing from within and

doing all I can to open myself to the medicine’s effectiveness.
I’m still available for health coaching, and if you are needing some help on your healing journey, check my website to contact me and let’s see if I can offer you any help based on what I’ve learned and from my experience.
Most importantly, I hope you find levels of peace as you work through your own version of grappling with liver disease or hepatitis.

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