Hepatitis C and Treatment - The Long Haul

June 25, 2015 By Matt Starr

The appointment with my gastroenterologist last week was good. She assured me that my overly ambitious mountain climbing adventure one week before was not the long-term set back I worried about. Actually, she was encouraging, going over labs from March until now, showing me how things had not changed much. I considered swimming my mile after the appointment, after six days of blahs, came words of approval, “It’s been working for you all this time, and there is no medical reason that that should change now.” This from my doctor who once told me I’d want to cancel my gym membership while on ribavirin.

I did hit the pool afterwards, and it felt good. However, my overall recovery energy has, despite my doctor’s encouragement, changed. By medical standards, I am rocking, but I do feel more fatigued after mowing the grass, hiking the woods out back, swimming, or whatever. I’m glad for what I have and what I can do, as most folks on these meds are hit much harder. It’s still the last week of June though, and from where I sit, October sounds farther away than ever. It has been suggested that, since I’m basically tolerating the meds well, I continue with ribavirin for the total length of the treatment, which was originally going to be half that time. Part of me doesn’t want this, as summer plans will probably need to be adjusted. But, a bigger part of me accepts the much longer ribavirin use. I will do whatever is needed to avoid the unlikely chance of a relapse. The hepatitis C virus is not detectable at this point, and a relapse would be crushing. So, red blood cell depletion be damned, I’m in for the long haul.

Regardless of one’s personal situation, what does it mean to hunker down for the long haul? Can we deal with liver disease and hepatitis, get serious and be open to a wide range of possible treatments, while still maintaining our love for life and what is all around us?

I suggest you try to make the answer to that question “yes.” I can only speak for myself, and those I have worked with, but “yes” has made change possible. In life, whether we are blessed with good health, struggling, or somewhere in between, we all face this “long haul” question. One way to bring our life along the healing path is to identify our life purpose, our dedicated vision. When we identify our life’s purpose, having positive attitudes and actions allow us to reach and maintain that vision. For me that means dedicating myself to yoga, meditation, daily walks or swims, acupuncture, good nutrition, and using a combination of western, eastern, and holistic medicine and philosophies. When we see what we want, we identify what we need to do to empower that vision into reality.

In times of health crisis, this is critical. I circulate back to my vision constantly, which is to be peaceful, loving, and happy; and to use what I’ve experienced to help others. Staying in tune with that big theme, I can then try to consistently do the things that assist that purpose and vision to manifest in my life. I draw from a long list of healing actions that have nothing to do with my hospital care or my doctor ,who I deeply appreciate. All this is part of my healing.

The long haul. When we dedicate to a life vision, it becomes second nature to accept deeper commitment. Trust me fellow seeker. More importantly, trust your true self. Stay with it, it’s worth it.

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