Living with Liver Disease; Living with Peace

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Living with hepatitis C, as I do, or another serious disease or hardship, has its ups and downs. Personally, I needed to face the challenges that lurked within the fear and loss. This was not easy for me. What about you?

I am optimistic by nature, to the extent that in my younger years my "Don't Worry, Be Happy" gestalt, while making me fun to be around, worked against me at times. Like everyone, I ran into serious issues from time to time. I typically just used denial or unbridled optimism to brush those problems away as if nothing had really happened.

But something had happened. Without really working on the feelings that the negative event caused, I left myself open for more of the same later on. I didn't want to engage with the feelings of fear or loss. I appeared to be fine, but those negative feelings were still brewing around. I learned to change that pattern, but it took a long time. It finally took the painful reality of hepatitis and ongoing post transplant complications to harness the wisdom I needed to optimize levels of own my self-healing.

There was no skipping down the road for me. Living with liver disease, and the fear, loss of control, shame, loss of my life of athletic training, and the need to change as a parent and husband were feelings that I just couldn't walk away from. I had to deal with them while not letting them drag me into darkness. Staying positive about what I still had, while not allowing myself to obsess on what I'd lost, was the balance that allowed me to still live with joy (most of the time) and to love the life I live now.

That's the path that I traveled. What about you? Have you ever felt trapped by the dark gremlins that want to drag you down into depression and despair? Have you ever ignored your health concerns with a new age notion that just being positive will heal? Did either of those extremes really help you?

My experience and work with others tells me that we need to wrestle around with our fears, and to also live with peace, appreciation, and love for life. It is so important. Sometimes we need help with this balancing act; sometimes we can go it alone.

As the Dalai Lama says in The Art of Happiness, … "our moment to moment happiness is largely determined by our outlook. In fact, whether we are feeling happy or unhappy at any given moment often has very little to do with our absolute conditions but, rather, it is a function of how we perceive our situation, how satisfied we are with what we have." (p. 22)

Laugh, sing, share your love, hug and talk to your kids, stay in touch with friends near and far, go for walks, meditate or pray to God or your Higher Power, sit in the shade, do whatever blows your hair back. And, fight the demons that haunt you, deal with them, and beat them down as best you can.

Everything is Possible.

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