



Hepatitis C: Look for Similarities, Not Differences

June 25, 2013 By [Lucinda K. Porter RN](#)

Comparison is the thief of joy. ~ Theodore Roosevelt

Many humans, me included, have a tendency to compare themselves to others. In my last blog post, I confessed that sometimes I compare myself to others in order to motivate me into action. For instance, if someone with end-stage liver disease can exercise, then I can too. As a person living with hepatitis C, sometimes I have to scheme in order to get myself off the couch.

The trick is to use comparison to motivate, not chastise. Wondering if I am thinner, richer, happier, or more successful is a useless comparison. Another waste of brainpower is when we compare our experiences of hepatitis C with other peoples' experiences. Whose viral load or liver enzymes are higher? How much liver damage do I have compared to someone else? How many times has someone done treatment?

The absurdity of our tendency to compare became clear to me while watching the 2012 Olympics. When South African Oscar Pretorius made history running on artificial legs, someone said to me that Pretorius's prosthetic devices gave him an advantage over other runners. Shortly after, while watching the Para-Olympics, I heard that single-legged runners remarked that no-legged runners had an advantage. Personally, the only advantage that Pretorius had was an abundance of determination--he didn't let the absence of legs stop him from being an Olympian. Then Pretorius was arrested on a murder charge, and no one was debating his supposed advantage.

Although it is human to compare ourselves to others, it helps if I use that comparison in a positive way, rather than a negative one. My rule of thumb: If comparing myself to others helps us, then it is alright to compare. If it hurts anyone, then it is an unnecessary comparison.

Having hepatitis C is enough to deal with, without adding additional negative thinking to my life.

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