Hepatitis C: Oh the thinks you can think

May 8, 2015 By Grace Campbell

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”
- Socrates

If it gives us little else, treatment for Hepatitis C can often give us a whole lot of thinking time. Thinking while you’re waiting at doctors, clinics, pathology labs. Thinking while waiting for results, waiting for good news, waiting to feel better. Thinking about how it’s possible to drink enough water to float a small tropical island without wearing a track in the carpet on the way to the bathroom.

It has certainly provided **me** with a lot of thinking time. Oh, the thinks I’ve been thinking!

A book by New York Times columnist David Brooks called *The Road to Character* gave me some real food for thought. In it, Brooks talks about virtues:

"I’ve been thinking about the difference between the rÃ©sumÃ© virtues and the eulogy virtues. The rÃ©sumÃ© virtues are the ones you list on your rÃ©sumÃ©, the skills that you bring to the job market and that contribute to external success. The eulogy virtues are deeper. They’re the virtues that get talked about at your funeral, the ones that exist at the core of your being -- whether you are kind, brave, honest or faithful; what kind of relationships you formed.

Most of us would say that the eulogy virtues are more important than the rÃ©sumÃ© virtues, but I confess that for long stretches of my life I’ve spent more time thinking about the latter than the former. Our education system is certainly oriented around the rÃ©sumÃ© virtues more than the eulogy ones. Public conversation is, too -- the self-help tips in magazines, the nonfiction bestsellers. Most of us have clearer strategies for how to achieve career success than we do for how to develop a profound character."

Talk about laying it right out there on the table.

I’d hazard a guess that most of us live in the “resume virtues” part of life. We spend a lot of time thinking about our jobs, our careers, how to work well, how to be more productive, what’s happening at work, what needs to happen at work, how to balance what happens at work with what happens in the rest of your life.

It’s often only when faced with a serious life changing prospect that we start to think outside the narrow confines of our day to day work.

If you were asked to write your own eulogy, what would you say? What would be the virtues you want people to remember you by? Would it be “She worked really hard and answered work emails on her

holidays”? Or would it be “She did the best she could and will be remembered as a kind and empathic person, loved by family and friends alike”.

What would others say about you?

We all struggle along the road to being a good person. It’s not easy for any of us. We all make the usual blunders and mis-steps and detours. But it’s in the effort of trying, the struggle of getting up when you’ve fallen, that you learn the most about yourself.

I’ve learnt I’m a control freak. I flip-flop between trying to be all zen and in reality being an anxious person desperately trying to be zen. I’ve learned I hate waiting for results. I’ve learned I am much more a glass half empty person that a glass half full person.

But I’ve also learned that I try, and I never stop trying. I don’t give up. I persist. If I’m in a hole, sooner or later I start digging my way out.

Has Hepatitis C given you the opportunity and time to think about your life, to examine it? And if so, did you like what you saw?

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