A Hepatitis Story

December 31, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Tonight is the last night of 2018, and the perfect time to tell your story. Perhaps your story is about living with hepatitis C, or being free of it courtesy of modern medicine. Your narrative might include cancer or liver transplantation. The story you tell may include unhealed wounds or the unfolding of your tale of coming to wholeness.

My story changes. For 25 years, hepatitis C was the central theme of my story. Now it is a thread but not the main event. Free from hepatitis C, I am now looking at other conditions that need healing. There is always room for more change, for more healing, and for more leniency about my imperfections.

I don't live my story alone. We have stories that we share with each other; we also have a story that is our communal story. In his book In Arabian Nights: A Caravan of Moroccan Dreams, Tahir Shah wrote, "Stories are a communal currency of humanity."

What does that mean? Well, I have a story about that. I got hepatitis C in 1988. I never told anyone about it; nor did I share my story about how I acquired it. Five years later I was in nursing school, and assigned my first patients. My first one had dementia from HIV. We couldn't talk much, and relied on nonverbal communication. My second patient was a woman my age who was dying of end-stage liver disease from hepatitis C and alcoholism. She was my age. She was quite coherent and shared her story with me. It was an experience of communal currency. It was rich. She died a few days later. I didn't hide that currency under a mattress; I shared my story from then on.

As we look ahead to 2019, consider increasing our stash of communal currency by sharing your story. Stories give us hope. There are solutions embedded in our words. Stories tell our fellows, "You aren't alone. You will get through this."

And in the telling, we are transformed. As Hans Christian Andersen said, "Life itself is the most wonderful fairytale of all." Click here to tell your tale at Hep Stories.

Wishing you the very best in 2019.

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