Hepatitis C: How do you step back from your job when you are an over-achiever?

April 29, 2015 By Grace Campbell

Hands up the over-achievers. The workaholics. The obsessive compulsives. The “I’ve got this, it’s okay” people.

I’m one of those people. I cling to control.

And that’s where I come unstuck. Increasingly during my treatment for Hepatitis C I’ve been questioning whether I am functioning well at work. During my two weeks on holidays I managed really well. I was the best I’ve been.

Back at work, not so much.

I’ve lacked focus, I’ve been scattered and try as I might I don’t think I’m doing the best by my team. At the end of the day I’m exhausted. The more I think about it, the more I believe they need someone who is there 100%, rather than someone who is struggling to be there. I don’t want them to have to pick up after me. They deserve to have a team at full potential. So they’re honestly better off without me a couple of days a week.

I promised myself that this time round with my Hepatitis C treatment I’d fight the virus, not the treatment. Well I’m not doing that. I’m still trying to be all things to all people.

Now ask yourself how many times have I written this exact same thing in the past week or two? It’s like Groundhog Day. Slow learner. For some reason I think I’m indispensable.

News Flash - I’m not.

If I died, they’d move on. If I left, they’d move on. If I’m not there a bit for the next month or two, they’ll cope. I’ve spent years building up a great team. Ensuring they develop their capacity to step up and lead when needed. Always including them in decision making. Making sure they all feel valued and appreciated. And I’ve done it knowing that this day would come. A time would come when they need to lead and manage the workplace. Now I’ve spent all that time putting a great team in place, why can’t I let them go do what they do best?

A higher-up-the-chain-of-command person was with me yesterday going through some planning and

management documents. He asked why I was having trouble letting go.

Was it that I define myself by my job? Not really, although it is an important part of who I am.

Was it because I don't have anything to fill my time outside work? I snorted. I'm chairperson of a management committee that oversees a significant budget. I'm also involved in sporting administration and I am a nationally accredited judge. I am also the administrative person for a number of very large events.

Was it that I didn't trust the people at work? I'd trust them to do every bit the job I usually do, with the exception of the benefit of nearly 20 years experience in upper management.

And yet, despite all the things I have and do, I still struggle to let go. To say no. To walk away when asked for help. I think it's just who I am - "I'm just a girl that cain't say no".

But ... this time I'm going to see my doctor about taking another day a week off. I don't want to be spending the weekend getting over my week so I can get up and do it all over again. I even have an appointment. Tomorrow morning. I'm going to give it a month and see how it goes.

I don't know how else to manage it. I just need to put down the work computer, step out the door and not look back two days a week. Not ring, not call, not worry. I've ticked off two huge work tasks this week, so the two biggest boulders for this half of the year are out of the way. I have no excuse to obsess or worry.

Time to review my priorities. Again. And try to get it right this time.

Because at the end of the day THIS is my moment. It will not come back.I will not get this particular opportunity again. I've worked so hard to access this treatment. Others have worked equally hard to get it for me. I need to pay that the respect it deserves.

Let go.

Or in the words of Frozen ... "Let it gooooooooo, let it GOOOOOOOOOOO ..."
followed by whatever comes next in that song. Clearly I don't have young kids, or I'd know it by heart.

It's time. And it's only taken me numerous meltdowns, lost sleep, stressed days and panicked nights to work it out.

Like I said - slow learner.

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