Perseverance Through Hep C Treatment

June 29, 2013 By Connie M. Welch

Hep C Warrior Colleen

Perseverance through Hep C Treatment. It always seems impossible until it's done. Guest writer and Hep C Warrior, Colleen Davis shares encouragement in persevering through Hep C treatment and her recent experience.

One definition of "to persevere" is to persist in a state or an undertaking in spite of opposition or discouragement. Anyone currently doing triple drug Hep C treatment or those who have been through other treatments know you must persist in spite of discouraging circumstances.

I will not candy coat this and tell you my treatment experience was a breeze. Many times I thought, "If I'd known treatment was like this, I wouldn't have done it." My husband tells me I said that, but he knew I wouldn't actually have changed my decision. I'm not so sure I shared his confidence!

In an attempt to help you persevere, here are some of the ways I coped. I write this five months post treatment with a thankful heart.

What were my options? I would consider the facts. This is a serious disease. Without treatment, it can progress to cirrhosis, liver cancer, or total liver failure. I would remind myself this is temporary, a treatment of six months in exchange for a healthy future. It was extremely important for me to finish this treatment for my son and daughter, to be healthy and here for them. Vertical and ventilating. That was my mindset.

I stayed in contact with a support group of family and friends. People close to me knew the situation. They called and very patiently listened. They prayed for me and sent cards; some visited and changed the focus of my day and lifted my spirits. This was a tremendous boost.

Drawing closer to God. Pre-treatment I searched for verses and devotionals, emailed them to myself and saved them. During treatment, I checked into Connie Welch's site regularly for encouragement.

"Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD." -Psalm 27:14

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" -Joshua 1:9

Galatians 6:9 tells us that "... we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

I told God how much I needed Him. I would ask Him specifically to give me the ability to inject the PegInterferon correctly, to sleep, not to itch, not to vomit my meds, etc., etc.

Changing my mindset about taking pills. If I needed medication to counter side effects, I reminded myself these drugs were temporary and necessary. If you are like me and don't relish being medicated, this is important. Take the prescribed drugs to survive the treatment. It will all soon pass.

Planning meals and snacks in advance. Just knowing I could open the fridge and grab a pre-mixed shake or find items quickly for the Incivek fat dose seems a small thing, but it was a huge help. Again, this is temporary. Don't worry about the high fat content. Don't worry if you're eating "unhealthy" fats. Fat is necessary for the Incivek to be maximally effective. I kept on hand a variety of high fat foods to suit whatever my stomach could handle; it helped tremendously.

I made sure to take nausea medication before the nausea set in and continued the medication as prescribed, even if I didn't think I needed it. (I almost always was nauseous and needed the medicine which worked great.)

Allowing myself to accept there would be bad days. I told myself I didn't have to overcome every circumstance; I just needed to get through each day and each night. One strategy... sleeping as much as possible. Tomorrow I could start again.

I sewed. I started small, worked at whatever pace I could and managed to complete a queen size quilt. Also, I sorted old photos and made albums for my grown children. Finding a hobby of any sort that you enjoy and that's easy to stop and resume later is a way to refocus.

Faking it. Don't laugh! Some days I didn't want my husband of four months to see me depressed or looking like I felt. So I would fake it and some days managed to convince myself I was feeling alright.

Checking days off the calendar and throwing away the finished calendar pages. My sister is a great believer in visualizations. She has a wire stretched across her home office. On it are pink paper clips, one for each month until retirement. At month's end, she glides another clip to the opposite side of the room! I would envision myself at the end of treatment or with only one month, week or one day to go and try to imagine what that would be like.

At times I would envision what it would be like to suffer from some incurable, painful health problem or be in circumstances totally beyond my control. I would think about Paul who gave thanks to God while in prison, chained to two prison guards, and I'd tell myself God could strengthen me to persevere.

Finally, I would read on LifeBeyondHepatitisC.com other Hep C Warriors' success stories and follow their treatment progress. That calmed me, strengthened me, shed light on the seemingly dark path I was following. And now, I'm done with treatment, and it was a success.

"It always seems impossible until it's done." Nelson Mandela

Can you relate? Are you dealing with feeling 'give out' through your Hep C battle? We'd love to hear your thoughts.
