Pre and Post Liver Transplant

December 15, 2015 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog, November 6, 2015.

I peer into the darkness several times every night. Sleep is hard to come by, so I toss and turn. My first thought is that I'm so very glad to be alive. All the years of waking up with the dread of knowing that my liver was scarred beyond repair and growing cancerous tumors is gone. I have a beautiful new liver now. Well, it's used, but new to me. When daylight hits, I stretch to work out the pain and stiffness before I sit up. My bones crackle and muscles ache. Today, I lay there rubbing my heels up and down on my shins in a weird self massage thingy I do lately while thinking about life Pre and Post Liver Transplant.

I would massage myself more often, but my hands hurt. So I got this contraption at Goodwill. It was "like new" in the box. The print and picture clearly show that it can relax my neck muscles if I lay my head on it. I lay all over it. I rub it up and down my legs. I twist my arms around it. I faceplant. Basically, I roll around like a dog in the grass on the thing. It's a private ritual.

After my bed yoga and self massage, I stand up and move my bent over self to the bathroom. By the time I hit the kitchen, my body is straightening. It still hurts. Standing in front of the coffee maker, I roll forward as though in caffeine worship, dangling my hands over my toes. Groaning audibly, I take a deep breath and raise my hands high until my arms are near my ears. I cry silently.

I cry because it hurts and I cry because I'm happy to be alive to feel the pain. Sitting in my chair, I have my journal and coffee. Waking up while writing the absolute truth about my life is a big part of my mental wellness. I make notes of my thoughts as they float by. My shoulders hurt and are drooping. (I sit up straighter now) Should I get on facebook or read about nutrition and exercise? Can brushing the cat put me in a meditative state? I need to go for a walk. That counts as prayer. I really want to go back to bed. Dancing to Led Zeppelin's Wanton Song counts as exercise...*To read the rest of Karen's blog, "Pre and Post Liver Transplant," click here.*

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