A Reasonable Reason

July 1, 2014 By Rick Nash

I guess it would help if I explain why I'm writing this, why I need your help to spread the word regarding the dangers of viral hepatitis, and why it's important to promote causes that can facilitate its eradication.

My name doesn't matter; I could be anyone you know. I was born under relatively normal c-section circumstances, except for a microscopic difference. I am one of the few vertical transfers, which means my mother had Hepatitis C and gave it to me once I was born. My brother and father do not have it. It's not genetic, it's not an STD, it's a blood-borne pathogen, which means it is transferred only through blood-to-blood contact. I have an odd perspective, because I've never known life without HepC.

It's a strange virus and doesn't affect everyone the same way. It attacks the liver, causing hepatitis (hence its name). Generally speaking HepC can cause jaundice, fatigue, cirrhosis, fibrosis, liver cancer, abdominal pain, dark urine/stool, loss of appetite, portal hypertension, esophageal varices , ascites, nausea, vomiting, and a personal favorite of mine... encephalopathy. What does all of that mean? It means if you've got Hepatitis, you're gonna have a bad time.

As horrid as this virus has been to me my entire life, in a way I am glad to have it. It's given me a perspective I could never had known otherwise and it's forced me to value such small things, to live within the ticks and tocks of the clock. It's caused me to dive into friendship and love. It's helped me trust others more so than I would have otherwise and build a strong family of friends. I enjoy the struggles of life because I've grown to love what it teaches.

Positivity aside, due to the nature of a deteriorating liver, transplants are often necessary (it doesn't cure someone of the virus, it just prolongs their life). Even with transplant, life expectancy is less than what it would normally be. I was staring at timer that read death before fifty... If the treatment I'm doing fails, I will need a transplant in less than two years.

I'm not the worst case of this...shituation, but I'm damn close. I'm also classified as a non-responder. What's a non-responder? In this case it's someone who has not responded to treatment. In my case it's three times I've failed...

So here we go. Round four, Here's to going from Hepatitis C to Hepatitis Free...

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