Risk and Mission

September 20, 2016 By Carleen McGuffey

Several years ago when I was sick in the hospital, literally fighting for my life, my husband James got frustrated with the lack of good information and resources in the hepatitis C community. James turned his frustration into a passion to become a hep C advocate. He worked to share our story, get medicine that cured me, raise awareness, and fight this hep C epidemic. Honestly I was embarrassed and reluctant to share my diagnosis because of the stigma, and snobs. However, I didn't want to discourage my husband who has always had a passion to serve those who suffer. Turns out this close encounter with death along with James wacky ideas to change the world has been the most beautiful thing that has ever happened to my family.

Now my whole family is fighting for those with hep C. All 8 of us have a mission. We are learning about loving people who suffer. Extending grace to people who are less fortunate. A big part of what we do is to stay strong enough to share our strength and hope with others who despair. We do this well because we too have despaired, been alone, ashamed and hopeless. Even now we are tempted to give in to the couch and remote control in lieu of adventure, mission, faith and service. Funny how living a life of ease really isn't easy at all. It's quite boring, depressing and unfulfilling to live an average life with little risk.

Everything about being a Hepatitis-C advocate is risky. We risk being shunned because hep C is contagious. We risk not having enough money and resources because no one is funding this cause. We risk being ashamed of our failures because hep C is a fairly new virus and there isn't a manual to serve this community well. We risk people criticizing us because we aren't qualified health professionals. We risk being sabotaged by clowns that are territorial. We risk our influence when we give radically. We risk our children's reputation when we share that we are working with drug addicts because we used to be one. And yet the risk is well worth the rewards because God has opened a million more doors than the naysayers could ever close. We have saved lives, relieved suffering, dispelled the stigma, made free testing available, promoted organ donation, educated the public, and connected the underinsured to free medicines. Seems the harder we work and the more connections we make, the more people we encounter that are difficult to serve. Of course this is true. If we were to decrease our mission to serving just 5 or 10 there would likely only be one or 2 obstacles. As we are serving more and more our obstacles also grow. Its tempting to keep things easy and light but not near as rewarding. Life is short, yellow people suffer alone. Our hearts are full our hands are busy and our mission to serve has never been more clear.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.