Stories Help us Survive Hepatitis C

September 26, 2016 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

A month ago, Peter S posted the following to my blog:

“My experience: Harvoni 12 Weeks * Clear * Medical Clear-52 Weeks * Recovery- It depends! * Diet-Exercise-Attitude-Gratitude-Abstain from Alcohol * Spirituality-Forgiveness-Help Others by sharing your story.”

It’s poetry. It’s hope. It’s truth. At the risk of demeaning this, it would also make a really good tweet.

What Peter’s words say to me is that health is a package deal. It is more than being cured of hepatitis C. It’s also more than eating a nutritious diet and daily exercise. Good health means being joyful, grudge-free, and helping others.

Helping others is a simple as sharing your story. The poet, William Carlos Williams wrote, “Their story, yours and mine—it’s what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them.”

Sharing our stories requires vulnerability, exposing a tender part of ourselves. It is as intimate as sex, perhaps more so, because stories live forever. Perhaps more so when we tell our stories about living with hepatitis C. This disease is stigmatized, and when we tell our stories, we can’t untell them. Our stories land on each other, which helps us keep going.

But we don’t really want to untell our hep stories, do we? Isn’t that why we are here, sharing these words? Aren’t we all connecting with each other because of our stories, and basically saying to each other, “We are here, together, confronting hepatitis C, and changing the world.”

Native American healers ask the sick, “When was the last time you told your story?” It is the same question I ask of you. To tell your story, visit HEP Stories.

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