What Will Power

April 6, 2015 By Rick Nash

Over each of the various treatments I've been on, every so often the subject of willpower comes up. Many are impressed by a never-say-die attitude. But to me, survival is only so impressive.
The inner-strength, Willpower, is an amazing force and I've come to find that there are two main manifestations.

The unyielding force that protects, and keeps you going, is resistance. It is defensive, for me, it has helped me ignore any other option but the next treatment, and getting cured. I resist the temptations that have come in front of me, that may cause my liver damage. In college, many options came before me. And for me, there is no morality regarding alcohol, drugs or anything else of that nature, there is only my mortality. How many years of my life, is that drink worth? How long can I tolerate this before I need whatever pain med they'll give me?
(There are certain pain meds which aren't as impactful on the liver. Here's a good breakdown of NSAIDs Opiates and OTCs, but there isn't exactly a standard in practice, so not every nurse understands the degree of liver damage/how much a patient may be able to tolerate a pain med. A few years ago I re-framed what I told nurses: I have HCV, my liver is decomp, and I refuse morphine, please advise on pain meds with less hepatic impact.)
I have spent so much energy on resistance, that I've lost a lot of the other very similar manifestation.

Persistence, the ability to force that willpower on the world, to keep moving forward similarly unrelenting like resistance, but in offensive stance. It is the drive, the motivation that feeds the need to be bigger than ones' self. I am finding my fuel for this, in taking the experience and understanding of other's I've gained through the introspection of treatment and its subsequent failure. In a way taking to my personal shortcomings and applying that same attitude. Much like in treatment, it is the slow grading process of constant trial that has given me more value for the goal. If I am to run, I should walk first, if am to walk, I should crawl first, and if I am to get off my ass I should probably get up first.

The two manifestations are methodically the same, but used for different purposes. When fear or doubt begins to could my vision, I find strength in review of my last choices.

But rather than focus on what could I have done, I break down what I did, and turn my attention to the notion that given I've made these choices, how will each impact my future. It's part of the process of introspection that pushed me forward through treatment, and helps illuminate the path I wish to take. The light of hope and confidence does wonders to dispel fear and doubt.

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