Mind Over Health Matters

Carie Ford-Broecker thinks positively to become negative

January 1, 1996 By Scott Williams

Candles, statuettes, incense and nostalgic personal tokens adorn Carie Ford-Broecker's living room altar and a sweeping window view of the deep blue Monterey Bay frames this corner of her cozy home where she comes to meditate and visualize. "It's a Wonderful Life!" is the mantra headlining her 15-point plan for physical and spiritual transformation which is posted above it all. But standard-issue peace and serenity have not been the goals of Ford-Broecker's meditation: She visualizes the complete elimination of HIV from her body.

Ford-Broecker deeply believes that, as a result of her mental and spiritual labors, she is now HIV negative. "I don't even consider myself positive anymore," she says. She first tested HIV positive in 1989, although she thinks she was infected a couple of years before that. She takes no antivirals and recently even stopped taking Septra to ward off PCP. Since she endured a desensitization protocol in order to take Septra -- a rigorous schedule of steadily increasingCarie Ford-Broecker doses to build her tolerance of the drug -- and she'd have to undergo the protocol again to resume taking Septra, this was the last medical therapy to go.

Avoiding all medications often spells trouble for people who have been diagnosed with AIDS, but there are no outward manifestations of ill health for Ford-Broecker. With her blonde hair, tanned skin and joyful nature, she looks like the picture of healthy California living. "I just take my vitamins, which all HIV negative people should do anyway," she says.

Before her expedition into radically healing herself, Ford-Broecker had taken the more well-traveled road of Western medicines. But her original journey through the epidemic provided her close experience with the dying process. "My first husband, Scott Ford, died several years ago, and caring for him made me stronger. I didn't project his illness onto me, as some people do."

After her husband's death, Ford-Broecker (then Carie Ford) went to work in the field of AIDS care as the director of client services at the Monterey County AIDS Project. "It was a dream job and I was happy for so long. But the job took a toll. The and grief over lost clients made my T-cells drop from 400 to 30 in one year."

The big drop shocked and frustrated Ford at first -- even more so because it occurred during the same year she fell deeply in love with her current husband, Scott Broecker, who was absolutely certain that she could completely heal herself of AIDS -- if she set her mind to it.

“He is central to my entire outlook,” says Ford-Broecker. But even she was originally skeptical about his belief that she could cure herself. “My first thoughts about his optimism were: ’That’s so sweet, but he really doesn’t know what he’s talking about.’ But now I have a whole new reason to live. The joy and love I feel in my life for everyone and everything is so intense that I cannot imagine dying from AIDS.”

Ford-Broecker’s simple biological explanation for her regimen is that her cells are energy which can be changed. She abstractly visualizes HIV, which she says can be changed into benign matter.

Every day Ford-Broecker visualizes her future that’s filled with happiness and joy. "I see my future and send light and energy to it. My future self sends light and energy to me in return. That’s the crux of my program -- this creative future. And I have only *one* future that I’m looking into."

Ford-Broecker doesn’t advocate her approach for everyone with HIV or other life-challenging illnesses. She says you must be in the right place at the right time -- mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically. “Commitment to your own program is key, as is recognizing that you always have choices. The choices society or your doctor may give you are not set in stone.” The other components of her philosophy are self-love, a non-judgmental attitude towards herself and others, and unconditional love of all people.

Ford-Broecker is waiting a while to get tested again for HIV antibodies. “The physical body is slower than the mind and spirit. Eventually, though, I’ll get tested. I know I will be negative.” As the bookmark lodged in a space on the back of her altar reads: Some things have to be believed to be seen.

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