Head Games

Carie Ford-Broecker's guided tour to the cure

April 1, 1997 Interview by Manjula Martin

When POZ profiled Carie Ford-Broecker in the December 1995/January 1996 issue, she had decided to heal herself of HIV solely through spiritual means. Despite a T-cell count that had dropped to 30, she stopped taking all her medications, including fluconazole (Diflucan) and the PCP prophylaxis TMP/SMX (Bactrim, Septra), and concentrated on ridding her body of the virus by meditation and visualization. Ford-Broecker, the former client services director of the Monterey County (California) AIDS Service Project, now tells us how she's constructed her no-treatment philosophy, how it's worked and how it feels.

Have you felt a change in your health since you stopped taking medications?

It's been great. A couple of years ago I decided to heal myself completely of HIV, and I did it through meditation and connecting with my inner guidance. After about a year, my guidance told me I was healed. I now don't refer to myself as a person with AIDS or a sick person. In my mind, I'm healed.

Do you mean you're now HIV negative?

I haven't gone to get tested [for HIV] since 1989, when I was first diagnosed. When I tell people I've been healed, they say, "Have you been tested?" But that's not what I mean. It's more of an inner feeling. I don't know when my healing will manifest physically; spiritually, I'm healthy. For me, healing is a personal process rather than a medical process.

What do you do to maintain your physical health?

When I started this, it was a spiritual plan. I meditate every morning. I try to maintain that meditative state of calm throughout my day. A little ways into my healing process, my inner guidance started telling me to develop the physical. I'm training for the Big Sur Marathon right now, so I run about seven to 15 miles a day. I don't eat meat; I eat a lot of organic foods; I try not to eat preservatives. I do take vitamins A, C and E, and if I feel like I'm getting a cold, I take echinacea.

Do you consider alternative therapies more effective than Western medicine?

I see Western doctors as looking at the body in segments instead of as a whole system. But a lot of people can only afford Western medicine. Until our health care system really opens up to natural treatments, it's hard for people on a low income to afford them. I wouldn't completely deny Western medicine -- there are some treatments that are incredible. I would say we rely on it too much. But my guidance tells me to trust the entire universe and that includes Western medicine.

Can you explain what you mean by your "guidance"?

I think everybody has a voice inside that is unconditionally loving and supportive and wise. It could be intuition; some might say it's God or Jesus or Buddha. I call it my inner teacher, because she teaches me what I need to know. She teaches me how to take care of myself.

Has this guidance evolved over a long period of time, or is it something you've only become aware of since your diagnosis?

It seems to have evolved naturally. Being in the position of having a potentially life-threatening illness caused me to look at what I wanted to do, whether I wanted to live or die. I made the decision that I wanted to heal myself.

I left work in 1994, and I spent a year drawing and meditating and taking care of myself. I read every book I could find on self-healing and spirituality, and I started to try to reach out to other people as well. I put on mind-body healing workshops; I did a local radio show called the Healing Hour. And then I started my own office called the Center For Living, where I hold workshops and do spiritual consulting. I'm just finishing a book, called Reach For Your Soul and Your Life Will Heal Itself. It's currently in the editing stages.

Would you consider taking Western therapies again if the "right" drug came along?

I don't read newspapers or watch TV, so I don't hear anything about HIV anymore. A lot of people have talked about these new protease inhibitors, which I don't know much about. People ask me, "Wouldn't you take a protease inhibitor?" But I don't feel like I need it. I'm doing fine. I just take it day by day.

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