



Throb

April 25, 2010 By [Richard Ferri, PhD, ANP](#)

The room I write in is dark tonight. I can see a slight reflection of my face in the monitor. As I adjust the screen what stands out is that my right temporal artery is throbbing. I can feel the blood punish its way through the vessel in my head. My breathing is becoming a little more difficult than I imagined it should. I feel remarkably calm and I sit here and take my blood pressure again as see it bound up to 190/130. I try not to think about it. But it is *all* I can think about.

I have made sure my desk drawer with all my important legal papers are in order. I know I am being over dramatic but it feels like some drama is called for here.

My blood pressure has been on a slow ascent to cerebral annihilation for several weeks. The medications are not working. I don't have any room for lifestyle changes in my world. I am a sober jock that works out 5 days a week and eat an excellent diet. I don't smoke, drink or drug. My only downfall is taking HIV medications for nearly 20 years. I am a long-term AIDS survivor nervously waiting to be fallen by my once athletic heart.

It would only seem right. After all I certainly know what is like to live with a broken heart. I have a 9/11 survivor and widower. My parents all died suddenly and without warning in weeks of each other. I climbed out of the rabbit hole of addiction hell and surfaced to the top only to have "my best friend" attempt to ram me into that abyss again.

SO what I am I? Nothing. I am just a man with AIDS, a healthy jock with HIV who is being undone by my heart.

I am trying to survive one of the new moments of being HIV positive in age of miracle and irrational drug cures. One more expert telling me I have a life long disease that is manageable makes me to take yet another pill or powder. If this fucking disease so "manageable" how come I feel undone? How do I cope with feeling exhausted all the time? With the muscles of my body and my mind falling prey to this equal opportunity predator? I just feel like crap a lot and I don't know what to do about it anymore. My usual comforts no longer provide relief. It feels odd this time.

Like I have turned a corner that I do not want to look around.

I guess I am just damn tired of it all. I want another shot at feeling alive again. However, I know that is not up to me no matter what I say or do. So for now I will simply put one foot in front of the other and move on to the next thing. I suppose the scary thing is I find the journey more exhausting than any journey should be, and it leaves me breathless too many days than not.

One last look for now at my reflection and I see my temporal artery continue to throb and I wonder where does all the unwanted pressure go.

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