I’m Wearing A Different Color Ribbon This Year

January 11, 2018 By Martha Warriner Jarrett

Health challenges like HIV/AIDS are nothing to sneeze at, as those of us living with HIV certainly know. But as we age, we will all find other health challenges that we also have to face. As I turn 73, it seems like if it’s not one thing, it’s another. My challenge for this year is COPD (hence the gold awareness ribbon). As a former smoker, I guess I shouldn’t be surprised, but I am. After all, I quit smoking in 1981, so I thought it no longer mattered. So was it smoking, or can I blame my COPD on the bad air where I live (The Guardian recently named Bakersfield, CA, as having the worst air in the country)? On the other hand, does it matter what caused it? Like HIV, I’ve got it and I have to deal with it.

I’ve never considered myself a very religious person. Most of my life, I rarely went to church, although I’ve always considered myself a Christian. I know there are lapsed Catholics—are there lapsed Christians? Anyway, when I was diagnosed as HIV positive, I did turn to God. So while I may not have gone to church, I guess my faith hadn’t really lapsed. It helped with the HIV diagnosis, and it will help with COPD. In the middle of the night, I can hear a still small voice that tells me there is a light at the end of the tunnel. A voice that says there is hope. A voice that says, once again, that I’ll make it through and rise above this new challenge. A voice that says I can once again turn my brokenness into blessings. A voice that says 2018 will be a better year. I hope the same is also true for you.

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