

Why Do The Activism Thing?

November 1, 2013 By [Josh Robbins](#)

Social media HIV activist, Josh Robbins, offers insight on a moment in newly diagnosed individual's journey that is prime for encouragement, possibly yielding new homegrown activists.

Why Do The HIV Activism *Thing* ?

I joke often about owning a small business in Nashville and how - "if I knew then, what I know now about owning a small business, I don't know if I would do it all over again." It's funny how *monday morning quarterbacking* or what's that phrase-- *hindsight is always 20/20*-- appears in almost every facet of our lives if we allow it.



So, what about activities in our lives that require sometimes way more time and attention than we ever thought it would-- like activism, or [social media HIV activism](#), as I describe it. Do we implore that same question of "why the heck am I doing this?" I certainly have.

So why do this HIV activism thing at all

I have always looked up to different individuals for their personal stakes in causes that are important. People like Oprah-- for her commitment to African schoolgirls' education, Martin Luther King, Jr. and now, [Ryan White](#) for his HIV activism. Luckily for me, I have be blessed to have met hundreds of others living with HIV (digitally, socially or in person) that continue to personally engaged me with their amazing, sometimes terrible, stories of how HIV affects them or their friends. Because of that awesome responsibility and honor, I have a duty to continue to empower these amazing and weathered digital friends with the best possible applications, blogs, videos and content that I can create. And I feel like, I've done that- or at least tried. But it's not enough yet...

A choice of someone for which I'm trying to reach

You see, a person that learns they are living with HIV has a quick choice:

1. to either become a victim or a statistic of whether or not they get into and stay in treatment, or
2. whether they take care of themselves WHILE being a hell of an ambassador for prevention and anti-stigma, reducing the amount of new infections on their local level.

My justification lies within myself



It is my opinion that, if you reach this newly diagnosed individual as soon as possible, with simple encouragement and wisdom from others living with HIV (*that they still have a purpose, that they are still capable of making a difference, that they still can live and love, and that they are still LOVED by many*), and a powerful call-to-action for prevention, that then- they will become the greatest tool to ending the spread of HIV. You see, it is actually *then* that they can become, at their local level, the personal face, name, and story for a virus that others can relate--at their local level. It's the "if he can get this thing (HIV), then I can too" mentality. This results in that newly diagnosed individual encouraging those in their immediate circle and community to protect themselves--preventing new infections. You can't get more grassroots than that, really.

"I know... because I'm one of those examples."

This opportunity changes the energy from hiding the diagnosis of that individual, towards an energy to take their personal health seriously, an excitement for their new activism, and true desire to help others living with HIV and prevent new infections. Please understand this isn't utopian logic, it is, in my opinion, one untapped avenue for assisting us all to see the end of HIV.

This driving force of my [HIV blog](#) and passion is exactly why I've had the chance to meet and hear so many newly infected individuals stories, and why I focus so much energy on offering encouragement to those living with HIV.

That's why I do it. So what do you call your activism? And why do you advocate for those of us living with HIV? [Email me.](#)

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