

## “Salvage Therapy:” Reframing the Concept

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I remember when I first heard the term “salvage therapy” used in response to my treatment plan. My heart sank. Waves of emotion swept over me. I did not know whether to cry or get angry. I was numb, a feeling I remembered all too well from the day I was told about my HIV positive status. Once again, I found myself faced with the fragility of life and an urgency to get my house in order.

I think that the term “salvage” is an interesting term, for it can imply two different schools of thought: salvage can be a “last ditch effort,” or it can be defined as “rescued because of its value.” One definition creates a sense of hopelessness created by fear, the other hope founded in love. I admit that at first I allowed the “fear” to create in me an overwhelming sense of hopelessness, which very quickly sent me spiraling downward into a pit of depression. Time, however, has granted me perspective and allowed me to gain insight into the term salvage therapy.

I prefer to view the term “salvage” as a description of something of great value. Perhaps when faced with our own mortality, life begins to slow down and the gifts and value that we bring to the world become more clear. One’s worth can never be diminished by person or event, for worth is granted to us at birth and our journey is an opportunity to discover the very mark that we are to leave on the world. Each of us are granted gifts and talents that no other person will ever have. What a mind boggling thought, what an awesome responsibility.

I dare not go through life unconsciously and methodically, but with thought and reverence. I must awaken to the *value* that I bring to each new day. I must do everything that I can to remain healthy: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I must seek to promote balance in my life. I must choose to live a “positive” life, knowing that my choices provide insight and wisdom, but NEVER diminish or add to my worth.

Salvage therapy is not a last ditch effort, but recognition of your value to the world. May this year be one of discovery for each of us. As each day passes you change - perhaps the change is so minute that you may not notice it, but you change nonetheless. Each new day brings you face to face with new challenges, new people, and new hope - may we not be clouded by our past, our disappointments, or our limited vision. The dawning of each new day provides an opportunity to sing, dance, tell stories, and listen to the sweet sound of silence.

Treasure yourself for you are a jewel of great price!

# Recipe For A Happy, Healthy, Positive, Productive Life

*Author Unknown*

Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight, and height.

Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. If you really need a grouch, there are probably family members that fill that need.

Keep learning. Learn more about computers, crafts, gardening, whatever - just don't let the brain get idle.

Enjoy the simple things.

Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. Laugh so much that you can be tracked to your distinctive laughter.

The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves.

Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

Don't take guilt trips. Go to the mall, the next county, a foreign country, but NOT guilt.

Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

**REMEMBER** Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

# Staying Healthy

*David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP*

An article in *HIV Treatment Alerts* (October 2004), written by Marjorie Williams, recommends the following nutrition advice for people with HIV.

⌘ Positive people should take a multivitamin daily. A multivitamin that includes vitamins B, C, and E slows the progression of HIV disease.

⌘ Taking a vitamin B complex supplement has also shown to help the body's immune system better withstand the daily assault from HIV.

⌘ Selenium is a mineral that strengthens immune cells.

⌘ Glutamine or L-glutamine, a chemical found naturally in the body aids in reducing diarrhea and wasting, as well as slowing HIV progression.

⌘ HIV+ people should have their *body cell mass* (BCM) monitored by their healthcare provider. BCM is the total amount of all the cells that make up the active tissues of the body. The loss of 54% or more of BCM can cause death in an HIV+ person. Even if the person does not have an opportunistic infection. Losing weight for no apparent reason is a red flag that BCM may be decreasing.

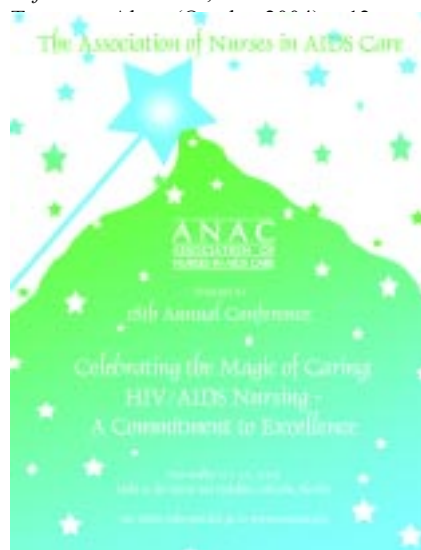
⌘ Maintaining a healthy BCM can be accomplished by eating protein (100-150 grams of protein daily for men and 80-100 grams daily for women).

⌘ Eat complex carbohydrates such as rice or legumes (pod plants like peas or beans). High calorie foods made from white flour or refined sugars should be eaten sparingly as numerous or excessive portions eventually may cause problems with maintaining blood sugar levels (an early sign of diabetes).

⌘ Fiber (found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) is also important to prevent constipation, colon cancer, and other illnesses of the gastrointestinal system. Individuals should take at least 20 to 30 grams of fiber each day.

Remember to always discuss with your healthcare provider the addition of vitamins to your treatment regimen as some are known to interact with antiretrovirals.

*Reference:* Williams, M. HIV 101: A vitamin (and mineral) a day can keep HIV at bay. *HIV*



**Schedule your time now to attend the 2005 Association of Nurses in AIDS Care Annual Conference, November 17-20, 2005. Being held at the Walt Disney World Swan Hotel, the conference promises to be educational, informational and provide opportunities to interact with other people with similar interests and struggles. The Call for Abstracts is available now at [www.anacnet.org](http://www.anacnet.org) and has a deadline of April 8, 2005. Watch the ANAC website at [www.anacnet.org](http://www.anacnet.org) for more information!**

# No One Is Saved by Silence

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP

I must admit to the theft of the title of this article. I stole it from an article in *Spirituality & Health* (Fall 2002). I was deeply moved by the article, especially since the day I read it was on World AIDS Day 2004. On many occasions I have asked you, the reader, to share your story in this newsletter with other HIV+ nurses. I could not begin to tell you how many emails/ phone calls I get from HIV positive nurses who, while searching the web, come across +Nurse and find it “helpful and uplifting.” Telling our stories brings hope to some, comfort to others, and offers insight into the struggles of the HIV positive nurse. As editor of +Nurse I have been moved to tears as I have read the stories of my fellow sojourners. I learn from each individual’s accounting and allow the wisdom of their experience to speak to me.

I would like to share some very poignant thoughts from the article in *Spirituality & Health* in hopes that it will cause you to consider “the healing power of telling our stories.” Margaret J. Wheatley writes:

“In Western culture, it is common to keep our pain to ourselves. The greater the suffering, the more we withdraw. We’ve been taught to bear trauma privately, to get on with life. And we who have not suffered trauma often silence the suffering ones. We don’t want to hear their stories because we won’t know what to say. When others voice their pain, grief, loss, and despair, we believe we must fix it or make it go away, that it’s not enough just to listen.

The tragic irony is that silence creates more trauma...Telling our story and being listened to is one of the simplest ways to heal...That’s all we need to do listen. Not judge, not recommend, not fix. Just witness, keeping our hearts open.

We can expect that triggering event, such as this first anniversary (referring to 9/11), will stir deep emotions. We can be present for those anniversaries, and offer ourselves as quiet companions, available to listen. We can share our vulnerability to prime others to share theirs. If someone begins to tell his or her story, we can refrain from commenting, advising, or interrupting. We can exercise the discipline of good listening, and the faith that is sufficient for healing, by just sitting there with our hearts open, absorbing the story into our being. At the end of the story, we can express gratitude that it is shared. And we can offer to listen to another story when it needs to be told.

As 14th century mystic Catherine of Siena said, “*Speak the truth in a million voices. It is silence that kills.*”

So my friends on this day, and every other, I honor your journey. I am reminded of so many who have left us physically, yet remain with us in spirit. I live because of the wisdom offered by their sacrifice. I am a better person because I have been the recipient of the gifts that they offered the world. Names too numerous to count. Faces unknown, yet there is a bond, a “knowing” that infuses me with courage to speak despite my timid spirit.

Will you speak? Remember, no one is saved by the silence. Our stories often provide healing and hope to nurses who are newly diagnosed and haunted by fear. You might be surprised how your story can touch the lives of others.

*Reference:* Wheatley, M. (2002). No one is saved by silence. *Spirituality & Health*, 5(3), pp. 32-33.

## For Good

*(From the musical “Wicked” by Stephen Schwartz)*

I’ve heard it said/That people come into our  
lives for a reason  
Bringing something we must learn/And we are led  
To those who help us most to grow/If we let them  
And we help them in return/Well, I don’t know if I believe  
that’s true  
But I know I’m who I am today/Because I know you....  
Like a comet pulled from orbit/As it passes a sun  
Like a stream that meets a boulder/Halfway through  
the wood  
Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better?  
But because I know you/I have been changed for good....  
It well may be/That we will never meet again  
In this lifetime/So let me say before we part  
So much of me/Is made of what I learned from you  
You’ll be with me/Like a handprint on my heart  
And now whatever way our stories end/I know you have  
rewritten mine  
By being my friend....

Like a ship blown from its mooring/By the wind off the sea  
Like a seed dropped by a skybird/In a distant wood  
Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better?  
But because I know you....  
But because I know you...  
I have been changed for the good...  
And just to clear the air/I ask forgiveness  
For the things I’ve done you blame me for  
But then I guess we know/There’s blame to share  
And none of it seems to matter anymore  
Like a comet pulled from orbit/As it passes a sun  
Like a stream that meets a boulder/Halfway through  
the wood  
Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better?  
I do believe I have been changed for the better  
And because I know you...  
Because I know you...  
I have been changed for good!

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We as a committee would love to hear from you. Do you have ideas for articles? We would welcome anyone who would like to submit an article. Deadline for our next publication date is April 1, 2005. Let us know if you are interested in writing an article.

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