

**Wednesday, June 18, 2003 – 1:30 p.m.**

I have spent a lot of time exploring the behaviors of the guys in the HIV-positive chat room on Gay.com. This has definitely been an eye opening experience at how people think. I was talking to a local guy, "Joe12pack," about this "bug chaser" who was ecstatic to the thought of someone infecting him with HIV. I told Joe12pack I couldn't imagine how someone could logically convince themselves that they were so doomed to catch the disease that they may as well jump right on in the HIV pool. I asked the bug chaser if he had talked with anyone who was HIV-positive to find out what it was like living with the disease. He said that he had thoroughly researched it and was sure. As I told Joe12pack this, he said it was "because I was still mad at myself for contracting this and didn't want it." That is true. I'm not glad right now that I brought this on myself. I guess I am a bit disappointed that I pushed the limits of my body so far that it had to escalate to this level, but being angry with myself wasn't going to solve anything. I accept the path I've chosen, however twisted it seems, and I will make the most of every opportunity that comes my way. Taking the knowledge and experiences of my past to become wiser and stronger, so I can help other people to learn from my past. I don't believe there are mistakes. There's what we do and what we don't do. It all serves a purpose.

I spoke with my best friend Pat today in an Instant Messenger chat. She had been so busy with end-of-fiscal-year work, I hadn't been able to talk with her about my news.

**Patriciathena** (12:24:48 PM): *Hey, you... :-)*

**VBTerry25** (12:24:51 PM): Hey

**Patriciathena** (12:25:20 PM): *Read your e-mail this morning. I haven't been ignoring you. Just in shock... cried... I' here for you.*

**VBTerry25** (12:25:51 PM): I know you haven't been ignoring me... and I'm sorry

**Patriciathena** (12:26:10 PM): *Are you doing ok?*

**VBTerry25** (12:26:21 PM): Amazingly, Pat... I don't understand how

**VBTerry25** (12:27:21 PM): It's emotionally exhausting

**VBTerry25** (12:27:31 PM): especially with every person I have to tell

**VBTerry25** (12:27:48 PM): I guess because I feel their feelings

**Patriciathena** (12:27:54 PM): *I know. It has to be draining... but you know what?*

**Patriciathena** (12:28:04 PM): *You and I both said that something big was about to happen.*

**VBTerry25** (12:28:04 PM): I'm tough?

**VBTerry25** (12:28:08 PM): I know

**Patriciathena** (12:28:10 PM): *Didn't think it would be this.*

**VBTerry25** (12:28:13 PM): Me, either

**Patriciathena** (12:28:20 PM): *But you are the right person to turn it around...*

**Patriciathena** (12:28:25 PM): *make it positive for everyone...*

**Patriciathena** (12:28:34 PM): *and something big will become of this...*

**Patriciathena** (12:28:40 PM): *and you'll be ok.*

**VBTerry25** (12:28:55 PM): I think so, too... but that's exactly what I needed to hear from you

**VBTerry25** (12:29:05 PM): great! now I'm crying

**Patriciathena** (12:29:44 PM): *I have been. But for a couple of reasons.*

**Patriciathena** (12:29:46 PM): *One...*

**Patriciathena** (12:29:54 PM): *I hate that you have to go through this.*

**Patriciathena** (12:29:57 PM): *Two...*

**Patriciathena** (12:30:13 PM): *I got scared because of our landscaping, but there's probably no need to worry.*

**Patriciathena** (12:30:15 PM): *Three...*

**Patriciathena** (12:30:41 PM): *A weird sense of... aha... maybe this is it... the 'thing' that you've been chosen to lead.*

**Patriciathena** (12:30:43 PM): *Who knows.*

**VBTerry25** (12:31:14 PM): I keep trying to hold onto that thought myself, because I had it on Friday

**VBTerry25** (12:31:33 PM): you don't have anything to worry about with our landscaping

**VBTerry25** (12:31:48 PM): you can't catch it from holding the same garden pipe

**Patriciathena** (12:31:49 PM): *I love you!*

**VBTerry25** (12:32:00 PM): I love you, too, Pat

**VBTerry25** (12:32:05 PM): and thank you so much for everything

**VBTerry25** (12:32:52 PM): There's no way I could do this without my support angels

**Patriciathena** (12:33:02 PM): *Everything? What... accepting you as my friend?*

**VBTerry25** (12:33:17 PM): unconditional love

**VBTerry25** (12:33:35 PM): That's the highest gift you could ever give someone

**Patriciathena** (12:33:50 PM): *yep. that's what we're supposed to do.*

**VBTerry25** (12:34:26 PM): exactly

**VBTerry25** (12:36:39 PM): all I can say is thank God for landscaping. If I couldn't spend time in my garden each day, I'd lose my sanity

**Patriciathena** (12:38:19 PM): *I'm the same way. The soil, the fertilizer, the watering... it does help keep the sanity. :-D Watching our plantings grow and mature... O:-)*

**VBTerry25** (12:38:36 PM): see... I knew you would understand

**VBTerry25** (12:39:52 PM): but you know, Pat... there are many ways to look at this in a good light. At least I'll take better care of my body and eat a healthier diet and rest when I need to, instead of pushing my body beyond its limits expecting it to perform at 110%

**VBTerry25** (12:39:54 PM): %

**Patriciathena** (12:40:52 PM): *You always push your body too hard. I try to keep telling you that. No listen to me, damn it!*

**VBTerry25** (12:41:09 PM): Haven't I always been hard headed?

**Patriciathena** (12:41:20 PM): *uh... yeah!*

**VBTerry25** (12:41:59 PM): The next few months are going to herald a lot of new changes in my life... I can't see exactly what they are, but I feel them coming.

**VBTerry25** (12:42:17 PM): I don't think I'm going to be doing my same job by September

**Patriciathena** (12:42:58 PM): *I wish you would just sit back and relax.*

**Patriciathena** (12:43:01 PM): *For a change.*

**VBTerry25** (12:43:11 PM): well, that's what Jackie told me

**VBTerry25** (12:43:15 PM): for 30 days I can't try to figure out my life

**Patriciathena** (12:43:47 PM): *what do you mean by that? no following you.*

**VBTerry25** (12:44:35 PM): She doesn't want me to have any tarot readings or use my astrology forecasts to try to figure out what's going to happen tomorrow

**VBTerry25** (12:44:48 PM): to basically just sit back and enjoy life for awhile instead of trying

to figure out my place in this world

**Patriciathena** (12:44:51 PM): *oh, ok.*

**Patriciathena** (12:44:56 PM): *you try to figure and figure.*

**Patriciathena** (12:44:59 PM): *let it happen.*

**VB Terry25** (12:44:59 PM): to have a little more faith that it's going to happen instead of trying to make it happen

**Patriciathena** (12:45:05 PM): *you may not have so much control.*

**Patriciathena** (12:45:13 PM): *yes.*

**Patriciathena** (12:45:14 PM): *try it.*

**Patriciathena** (12:45:20 PM): *it would be difficult for you.*

**Patriciathena** (12:45:36 PM): *you need something to keep your mind from racing into so many areas at once.*

**Patriciathena** (12:45:45 PM): *Hell, so do I!*

**VB Terry25** (12:45:58 PM): well, writing helps me focus on my current thoughts

**Patriciathena** (12:46:32 PM): *Keep writing.*

**Patriciathena** (12:46:35 PM): *There's a reason.*

**Patriciathena** (12:46:44 PM): *Do you have it all on the computer?*

**Patriciathena** (12:46:48 PM): *Backed up?*

**VB Terry25** (12:46:58 PM): I've got it in my journal that I bought about a month ago

**Patriciathena** (12:48:09 PM): *handwritten journal?*

**VB Terry25** (12:48:29 PM): yeah

**Patriciathena** (12:49:09 PM): *put it on cd, too, when you have time. You'll be able to manipulate the information whenever you want to compile certain things.*

**VB Terry25** (12:50:03 PM): I'd rather do it all on the computer, but having a paper journal is easier than carrying my laptop or PC around

**Patriciathena** (12:50:50 PM): *You type so fast, that it wouldn't take you any time to jot it into the computer every day.*

**VB Terry25** (12:52:27 PM): only, it's hard for me to resist the temptation of Chat when I'm sitting in front of my computer. If I have my journal somewhere away from the computer, I can't be distracted

**Patriciathena** (12:53:15 PM): *true, but you must have discipline... ;-)*

**VB Terry25** (12:53:39 PM): that's apparently another theme I'm trying to learn

**Patriciathena** (12:53:50 PM): *hehehe*

**Patriciathena** (12:53:56 PM): *yeah... I know the feeling!*

**VB Terry25** (12:54:18 PM): I thought to myself on Friday, it's like I'm choosing the life of Job... only different

**VB Terry25** (12:54:28 PM): choosing

**Patriciathena** (12:55:22 PM): *in what way? The suffering you've been through? Still holding out faith? We're supposed to do that, and you're a terrific example.*

**VB Terry25** (12:55:39 PM): taking on all these life challenges

**VB Terry25** (12:55:49 PM): I mean, I just keep thinking... what next?

**VB Terry25** (12:56:01 PM): Just when I think my life is going into an easy period, BAM

**VB Terry25** (12:56:21 PM): and yet I'm picking up the pieces of my Puzzle of Life to try to figure it all out again

**VB Terry25** (12:56:32 PM): yet to have such faith that I'll get to where I want to go

**VB Terry25** (12:56:38 PM): despite the heartbreaks

**VBTerry25** (12:56:41 PM): and disappointments

**Patriciathena** (12:56:44 PM): *If there's anyone with the perseverance to handle it, it's you.*

**VBTerry25** (12:57:06 PM): I appreciate that vote of confidence

**VBTerry25** (12:58:35 PM): Everything happens for a reason. When it no longer serves our growth to not know why, we will. I truly believe that

**VBTerry25** (12:58:41 PM): I've seen it in other parts of my life

**Patriciathena** (1:00:19 PM): *When I first read your letter, I hurt. I cried. But almost instantaneously, I thought...*

**Patriciathena** (1:00:26 PM): *There's a reason.*

**Patriciathena** (1:00:33 PM): *There's a purpose.*

**Patriciathena** (1:00:43 PM): *All the steps so far are leading you down a path.*

**Patriciathena** (1:01:10 PM): *But I'm afraid you'll analyze it to pieces and not see the forest for the trees.*

**VBTerry25** (1:01:36 PM): maybe not?

**Patriciathena** (1:03:32 PM): *Maybe you needed something like this to put things into perspective. Focus.*

**VBTerry25** (1:03:56 PM): It's definitely put things into perspective. I don't worry about trivial things anymore.

**VBTerry25** (1:04:01 PM): well, yet...

**Patriciathena** (1:04:03 PM): *good.*

**VBTerry25** (1:04:19 PM): and I can't let stress be a big part of my life anymore

**VBTerry25** (1:04:30 PM): I've got to focus on staying healthy, when that wasn't a big concern for me in the past

**Patriciathena** (1:05:07 PM): *Stress can take you down faster than anything.*

**Patriciathena** (1:05:12 PM): *It affects so many things.*

**VBTerry25** (1:05:23 PM): stress and negativity is what attracted this in the first place

**Patriciathena** (1:05:26 PM): *So don't push yourself so hard, please!*

**Patriciathena** (1:05:34 PM): *Eat right, sleep right.*

**VBTerry25** (1:06:08 PM): I'm trying to... that's why I say the next few months are going to be my adjustment phase

**Patriciathena** (1:06:57 PM): *I'm going to keep this IM on, but I have to get back to work. There's so much to do at the end of the fiscal year...*

**Patriciathena** (1:07:04 PM): *plus getting ready for a new administration.*

**Patriciathena** (1:07:08 PM): *WOOOO HOOOOOO!!!*

**VBTerry25** (1:08:21 PM): ;- ) I got some things I need to do, too... I'm ok. We'll talk later.

**Patriciathena** (1:09:24 PM): *I love you, Terry.*

**Patriciathena** (1:09:30 PM): *We'll get together soon, ok?*

**VBTerry25** (1:09:35 PM): Ok

**VBTerry25** (1:09:38 PM): I love you, too! \*HUGS\*

**Patriciathena** (1:09:42 PM): *I'm really wanting to take off a couple of days to do nothing.*

**VBTerry25** (1:09:48 PM): lemme know

**Patriciathena** (1:09:51 PM): *Maybe I can come over and help you landscape.*

**Patriciathena** (1:10:06 PM): *\*HUGS\* 8-)*

**VBTerry25** (1:10:14 PM): sounds good to me

**VBTerry25** (1:10:16 PM): lots to do

**Patriciathena** (1:10:26 PM): *Take care of yourself!*

**Patriciathena** (1:10:31 PM): *That's an order!*

**VBTerry25** (1:10:36 PM): yes, ma'am

**Patriciathena** (1:10:37 PM): *Oh, who am I kidding.*

**Patriciathena** (1:10:45 PM): *You never listened to me before! ;-)*

**VBTerry25** (1:10:53 PM): There's a first time for everything

**Patriciathena** (1:10:58 PM): ;-)

**Patriciathena** (1:11:04 PM): *yep. Talk soon, ok?*

**VBTerry25** (1:11:06 PM): get to work

**VBTerry25** (1:11:08 PM): ;-)

**Patriciathena** (1:11:25 PM): *yes, sir!*

**Patriciathena** (1:11:31 PM): ;-)