



Speaking from Experience *Cardiomyopathy/Heart Failure*

Transcript for chapter 9 of 10: Living with Cardiomyopathy

Kathryn, 41 (7 years since diagnosis): At the moment, my diagnosis of cardiomyopathy is just something I've learnt to live with. It's just there. Sometimes it's frustrating that I can't do a lot of the things I used to. But at other times, you just... You deal with it. Everybody's got something they've got to deal with, and this is it for me [Laughs].

Alistair & Joan, 66 (13 years since Joan's diagnosis): Any heart problem, you know, I dare say people are concerned – is their heart gonna stop? “Am I gonna have a heart attack?” or whatever. You know, initially with cardiomyopathy, there was a lot of sudden death. But with medications today, that's cut that risk down dramatically. And there's so much research being done into cardiomyopathy that, you know... I feel that if I have to have it, I'm probably in a good time to have it!

Gaylynn, 62 (Had cardiomyopathy for 2 years; 8 years since heart transplant): I feel that I'm very lucky, and sometimes I can't believe that I'm back, living a normal life. I am so lucky that I had the opportunity to have a heart transplant. And I'm very thankful to my donor family.

Alistair & Joan: I don't take it for granted. And as I said to the cardiologist in August, “I'm very aware that this condition can turn around.” But, you know... And I don't become complacent. I know that I have to watch my diet, I have to take my medication, and I have to exercise. And some people can do those things and it still doesn't work. This year, I lost a very dear friend who was probably more diligent than I was. But for whatever reason, his cardiomyopathy didn't respond the way that mine did. So, you know, I every day thank God that I am lucky and that I don't really get symptoms that stress me.

Kathy, 55 (2 years since diagnosis): I've come a long way in two years, and I'm leading a normal life, to a degree. But I'm feeling fine. Some days are not good, but, um... There's more good days than bad days.

Alistair & Joan: I set myself goals. When I was first diagnosed, I wanted to see our youngest grandson get to 5, then 10. And then now we have a new granddaughter. And I want to see her get to be a teenager. So, you know, I've said to the cardiologist, “Look, never mind this...” Initially, he said 50, 55. Then 60 and 66. He said, “Look, I haven't got a crystal ball, but you're pushing...” And when I was there in August, he said, “Look, perhaps we'll try for 80 or 85.” I said, “That'll do.” [Laughs]

Victor, 72 (18 years since diagnosis): Everybody love to be young forever. And fortunately, some people get old with dignity and their health. Some people get old by other means. Everybody from pneumonia to cancer to cardiomyopathy or stroke, whatever. I'm lucky – I went all through this and I still smile. And I still do what I want to do – maybe not to the full extent, but I have no complaints.