

Speaking from Experience Living with Osteoporosis USA

Transcript for Chapter 1 of 6: Diagnosis

Phyllis & Bob –

Well my life before osteoporosis was about the same as it is now. I'm a little slower, but I think that comes with age anyway.

Alan –

Well osteoporosis has had a huge effect on my family because both my first wife had it and I have it now. And so, for me I was diagnosed with it about 15 years ago.

Don –

I was ice skating and I took a bad fall on the ice. And I thought I might have cracked a rib or something so I went to my doctor and the doctor took an x-ray and when he saw the x-ray he said, "You know, I think you might have some bone loss so we better give you a bone density test." He gave me a bone density and he said, "Don, you have osteoporosis."

Shelley –

The first signs I had of anything were immediately before I was diagnosed. So I started having... I went away on a trip with my husband and was canoeing and I couldn't walk. I had done something horrible with my back and I had never had any back pain. And I was in pain and it never went away over several months. It would come and go but it never really went away. And that led up to my diagnosis.

Phyllis –

I'd get back aches, but I always had something like that when I was younger so I didn't think anything about the osteoporosis until I went this last time about couple of months ago and then it showed that it was serious.

Marti –

It was my mother being with me who in fact broke a bone that took me to the point where I was thinking about my own bone health and what does this mean to me. So that was the time at which I really did demand of my current personal physician that he do a bone density test.

Don –

Part of the reason that I believe that I got osteoporosis was that I was lactose intolerant and I stopped drinking milk...I don't know when I was maybe 17 or 18, and probably lacked a lot of calcium growing up, in those years, I found out now. At the time I didn't realize it but up until you're 32 or so you're building bone mass. So like for 15 of those years I was doing nothing. I wasn't taking any calcium pills or anything like that. So I think that was the period of time that really caused it. But at the time, osteoporosis was not well known and I certainly knew nothing about it. So that's what I think...part of it and the other part was that my mother already had it as well.

Shelley –

My father had osteoporosis, broke both hips and his spine. I'm small, small-boned. I started my period late, I was almost 16. And I had other factors that I didn't even know about at the time, until after I was diagnosed. So I have quite a few of those risk factors.

Don –

And my first question to him was, "Does that mean I have to stop skiing?" And he said, "You can't start anything new, but if you're careful you can continue skiing." So that was great and I started taking medication right away.

Alan –

Compared to my asthma which was life-threatening, the osteoporosis didn't seem to be life-threatening, didn't seem to be as important as it's become. So we just, we took it in stride I think. I know some people get depressed, but that didn't happen to me. It was just something else that we had to be aware of and manage.

Don –

My mother was not happy about it, because she saw what happened to her. But my wife... her first question was, "Can you continue skiing?" And when I said yes, she said...well then she didn't really care. She was fine. And so...matter of fact, I was skiing yesterday.

Shelley –

I actually went into a real severe depression basically. I had gone from what I thought was a perfectly healthy 53 year-old woman, active, to...I just was scared and really took a nosedive in terms ...I was just...I cried a lot, I didn't want to go out, I was scared to move...lot of fear and depression.

Marti –

To be diagnosed with that, it sort of took away my invincibility at that point in my life and made me question about what was I doing that was good for me. This is a period of time from...it ranges from about maybe 47 through now I'm...next month I'll be 67 so we're looking at 20-year kind of a range of things that occurred. And that...so I had to really look at well what am I doing to make this all in my favor.

Phyllis & Bob –

I had mixed emotions because I didn't know too much about...in fact, I didn't know anything about it. I had heard the word but... So then I started checking on it and my two adult children went on the computer. And they didn't get too excited about it. They just said, "Well, what are you gonna do about it?" And I said, "Well, nothing." You know? I didn't think I had to do anything and I didn't think it was gonna get worse. I just thought, oh that's something else, I'll take care of that one of these days. But the doctor this time said... when he wrote on his message to me was that it was serious, I said "I have to do something now and find out more about it."

Alan –

After I was diagnosed with osteoporosis, I decided to learn more about it. So everybody now goes to the internet, that's the great source. I did that, I asked my doctors, I read some literature.

Shelley –

One of the things that helped, the first thing was finding a really good doctor who was gonna give me good care and give me good advice. That was key because I hadn't had that before and having that helped that whole issue of fear and made me feel like I could trust again in getting good advice and good care.