Courage to Change

August 1, 2005 By Walter Armstrong

Life is change, and no one knows this better and feels it more sharply than people living with HIV. As an AIDS magazine publishing for more than 11 years, POZ has also had its share of changes.

All too often, these “changes” were the cruel effects of the disease itself. We had to deal with many deaths in our own wild, wonderful POZ family: courageous PWAs who came out in our pages; writers and reporters who broke news and pressed the patient-empowerment angle; activists who spent their last breath demanding HIVer rights; and readers whose trust, loyalty and honesty remain our most valuable resource.

But increasingly, in the epidemic and at POZ, change is for the good. There was the remarkable comeback of our founder, Sean Strub, who rose from his sickbed to steer POZ with his compass of healthy treatment skepticism and loud and proud activism. Then, a year ago, another change arrived in the form of a new owner. He immediately got our gifted and growing staff down to the business of—you guessed it—more change, kick-starting all kinds of innovations.

The magazine you hold in your hands—with its stunning new look and feel, right down to the logo—is only one such change. For another eye-opener, go to POZ.com and check out the matching new design and the new services it offers, from POZ Personals’ online dating to help for health and happiness at POZ Mentor to 24/7 AIDS coverage and commentary at POZ News & Views.

But there’s more at stake here than magazine redesign and internet interactivity. There’s the vision that a global HIV community can come together—one Personal, one Mentor at a time—to forge a movement for change. Changes like the new ethic of responsibility and leadership in prevention by HIVers proposed by David Evans in this month’s trail-blazing cover story (“Bite the Bullet,” page 26). That’s what the new POZ is about: creating in print and online a space where HIVers worldwide can connect, debate and dream big—of such urgent issues as female empowerment, an end to stigma and a cure for AIDS—and then make change that realizes these dreams.

In that sense, this radically new POZ is a faithful return to our roots. For that’s why Sean launched the magazine in the first place: He knew that, contrary to the then-official view that AIDS was a death sentence, surviving this disease was a reality. And having the courage of his conviction, he

felt compelled to spread the word.

So as you settle down with this first issue of the redesigned POZ, focus on the cover's single, great emotional message: courage. Every month, the cover of POZ will feature one such powerful feeling and HIVer face—to cut through our communities' difficult, distracting differences and to remind us of the profound humanity we share.

Take courage. And stay connected to POZ as together, with our founder Sean and publisher Megan Strub, we explore ways to change in order to keep pace with the epidemic, even as we stay true to where we started.

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