Talk Show

Tamara Lindley Brown proves that looks deceive

February 1, 1995 By Melanie Zurlo

“I’ll go anywhere to dismiss what we have bought into as the face of AIDS,” Tamara Lindley Brown says. “Because that face transcends to everybody.”

Having a conversation with Tamara Lindley Brown is like talking to a cross between your best friend and Mrs. Brady. A hip, grown-up Valley Girl, her laid-back attitude and all-American looks complete the portrait of the archetypical Orange County, California mom. It’s an image Brown is aggressively hustling.

Brown is HIV positive, making her an AIDS mommy without the political pedigree of Mary Fisher, an activist without the notoriety of Larry Kramer -- and she couldn’t care less. Her goals in life are simple: To become a grandma, be a good mother to three-year-old Joshua, grow old with her husband Garry and help people by showing them she is just another ordinary person thrust into the extraordinary circumstance of being HIV positive.

Brown is serving as co-chair of the Orange County Women and AIDS Task Force and being active in a number of AIDS organizations and their speakers bureaus.

As a heterosexual married woman with a history of monogamous relationships, Brown knew three years ago that she was not in a “high risk category” for AIDS, but she decided to get tested anyway after seeing an HIV positive heterosexual woman on an afternoon talk show. Recognizing herself in the face of the woman on the television screen, Brown realized for the first time that she, too, was at risk for the disease.

“I wish I had somebody out there telling me that this is an ’everybody’ disease,” Brown says. “If someone had told me that -- and we hadn’t tried to pin it on anybody else -- I would have been tested a lot sooner.”

Testing positive, Brown suffered monumental “identity crises,” then quickly began hwer career as an AIDS educator -- starting with herself. She devoured any reading material she could get her hands on. The knowledge she acquired daunting, Brown gave her husband the option of leaving. “I said, ’Darlin’, there’s the door. Why don’t you just go ahead if you want to leave because it’s going to be one roller coaster ride.’”

With her husband in her corner, Brown continued her education. Mindful of that face like hers she had seen on a talk show, she sought the advice of other HIV positive women. “I realized that I couldn’t be alone,” she says. “I had to gather a support system.”

And a true support system doesn’t just support you: Just by being connected you’re helping to hold others up. “The best therapy is when you get that call at midnight and it’s a woman back east who has no support, no family, no nothing.” Brown says. “She’s bawling her eyes out, she’s never talked to another soul in five years of her diagnosis and you’re able to touch her and calm her down for one moment. The minute you start talking about AIDS, you take away its power from within. And I talk so much, it has no power over me.”

Through her tireless work behind the speaker’s podium and in front of the camera, Tamara Lindley Brown has placed the power in her own hands, proving that although looks can be deceiving, they can be enlightening as well.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Talk-Show-17119-5750