The Soprano

October 1, 2003

To fight the stress and worry of HIV, I pray, use relaxation tapes—and sing. I let my soprano soar in the church choir and at weddings, funerals and other special occasions. Singing makes me happy, takes me out of myself and transports me: Suddenly I'm flying on a cloud, lost in the music. I return with a different perspective and renewed energy. Does that boost my immune system? Well, my T cells keep climbing—most recently from 600 to 740.

Singing relaxes me, and, more important, it reminds me that I am WOMAN—a professional woman who is neat, clean and organized, and who likes to have fun. Being HIV positive is a small part of my life. I like the color purple, for instance. I like peanut butter. The virus is not who I am. And that is a *trilling* thought.

—Leatrice Simpson, Chicago

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