How should I disclose my HIV status to a date?

Start with putting yourself in their shoes.

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David & JohnnyCourtesy of David & Johnny

An effective approach would start with putting yourself in their shoes. How would you want someone to reveal something personal to you?

Here are three tips:

- Remain calm and be yourself. Your tone is just as important as the information you're sharing. Speaking too loudly or too softly, hoping to get the conversation over with as quickly as possible, can be a complete turnoff. Be sure to speak calmly, but be assertive.

- Choose your words carefully. Disclosing is a balancing act between what you say and how you say it. Often a bad reaction is the result of unnecessary concerns. Talk about the care you're receiving and how it's helping you. Speak about your support system. Assure them all is well.

- Make the conversation interactive. Ask them if they know their HIV status and if they've been tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Sharing this information should be a two way street. Their answers will help you to gauge whether you're still interested in them.

Go to DavidAndJohnny.org for more information on all things David and Johnny. Also check out their video blog series "Table Talk" on POZ.com.

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