In My Life

Breaking bread with loved ones always grounds me. Increasingly, as I age, I try not to take those moments for granted.

August 17, 2026 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I have never been much of a cook. I love food, but I don't possess the passion to make magic in the kitchen. I won't starve—I do know how to boil water and use a can opener—-but fine dining my cooking is not.

Thankfully, I do have people in my life who enjoy preparing meals. My partner does a wonderful job of feeding us. When we go to restaurants, I often order things that I know he doesn't usually make at home. I also have my dad. He worked as a cook for decades, so my mom and my sister and I look forward to his meals.

Breaking bread with loved ones always grounds me. Sharing meals is not just about feeding my stomach but also nourishing my soul. Increasingly, as I age, I try not to take those moments for granted.

So I can relate to the familial dynamics of preparing a home-cooked dinner as beautifully described by long-term survivor and author Mark S. King in our cover story. He appears on the cover along with his brother, Dick King, and his husband, Michael Mitchell. I thank them for sharing their HIV stories in this special issue on aging. Go here for their recipe for getting older. "It's about family," says Mark. "The one you have and the one you make."

Currently, more than half of people with HIV in the United States are 50 or over. That proportion is expected to increase substantially in the coming years. For those of us living with the virus, especially if we have been doing so for decades, aging with HIV has become a happy problem. Go here to learn more about the many challenges of aging with HIV.

For long-term survivors from the early days of AIDS, overcoming HIV stigma and discrimination back then was a tall order. Unfortunately, for too many of us, such hurdles remain. A new book tells the story of ACT UP Shreveport during those dark times. Go here to read a Q&A with the

author and reflect on lessons learned.

Another difficulty for those aging with the virus is addiction. In particular, the use of crystal methamphetamine is a longstanding and ongoing crisis. When HIV, meth and mental health collide, a multifaceted approach is beneficial. Go here for more.

Being your authentic self is always a good idea, and former New York state Senator Tom Duane encourages all of his fellow long-term survivors to shine boldly at any age. Go here for more of his sage advice.

Although aging with HIV is most often associated with those of us who are older, the topic also includes younger people who've been living with the virus long term. Case in point: Lorenzo Davis. Now 38, he tested HIV positive when he was 16. Go here to read about his advocacy to preserve access to AIDS Drug Assistance Programs.

People with HIV are living longer, but long-term survivors often face unique obstacles. Please go to the back of this issue to take our survey and let us know what living long term with HIV has been like for you.

Facing barriers to aging with HIV was the subject of a national survey by the nonprofit organization HealthHIV. The survey identified issues across five domains. To read those findings and much more about aging with HIV, go here to find our latest POZ Focus supplement on aging.

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