Jim Modes

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Warren, Michigan
Positive since 1986

I was diagnosed in 1986. I didn't start on a cocktail until 1995. I am now 75 years old. My CD4 cells are almost normal and my viral load is undetectable. I recently had a minor heart attack and had a stent put in. Now I am on heart meds on top of my HIV meds. I have a primary doctor with the Department of Veterans Affairs here in Michigan. He is very knowledgable and up-to-date with the newest HIV meds. I feel that I am very lucky to have a doctor like him.

I lost the love of my life in 1993. He had Kaposi's sarcoma and missed the new meds by one year. I do miss him terribly. Dan was a fighter. He passed away at home. I took care of him with some help during the last three weeks of his life.

I am thankful for support from friends and family.

What three adjectives best describe you?
Outgoing, supportive and upbeat

What is your greatest achievement?
I learned from Dan's passing to not be afraid of dying. This keeps me going.

What is your greatest regret?
My moving experience from California to Michigan

What keeps you up at night?
Thinking about what is next in my life at age 75.

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?
I am not proud of being positive. If I could do it over, I would be more careful of my sexual habits and partners.

What is the best advice you ever received?
To be positive about life and to know being HIV positive is not a death sentence.

What person in the HIV/AIDS community do you most admire?

Myself

What drives you to do what you do?
Making friends and volunteering with the soup kitchen. Also my two dogs keep me going.

What is your motto?
Growing old with HIV is not easy.

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?
I would actually grab two things: my two dogs.

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?
A dog. They can be so spoiled and loved.

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