



Living Day to Day

Despite pain and discomfort, long-term survivor Anthony Romano continues to sing through life.

May 30, 2022 By Anthony Romano

My first HIV-related illness was cytomegalovirus (CMV) in 1976, years before the 1981 outbreak made the papers. I've since buried my partner in 1993 and buried too many friends to remember and taken every drug that has come along. So many drug studies, so many treatments. I am still here. Cancer became my focus in the '90s. I had radiation and surgeries. Today, I live most days in some kind of pain and discomfort. But I live day to day. I have been a singer all my life and will be until my time to leave comes along. Last year, I lost my oldest friend. My family is gone, and there are very few of us left. It is what it is!

What three adjectives best describe you?

Survivor, entertainer, teacher.

What is your greatest achievement?

Surviving for so many years.

What is your greatest regret?

Losing my partner before the new meds [protease inhibitors] came out. In the early days, we only had AZT, and it almost killed me.

What keeps you up at night?

Pain!

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?

Not telling my family so many years ago when they were still alive.

What is the best advice you ever received?

One day at a time.

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

Dr. Anthony Fauci and the late Dr. Steven Scheibel.

What drives you to do what you do?

I am not ready to give up. Also, my cat, Alex. He is my constant companion; I'm there when he needs me, and I need him.

What is your motto?

What does not kill you makes you stronger.

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?

My cat, Alex.

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?

A golden retriever. Best and most loving dogs ever.

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