



Speaking from Experience

Bowel Cancer

Transcript for chapter 7 of 10: Grey days

Peter - It cut us up because it took me so long to get over it. Because I was so fit, I think, and my wife felt that I had sort of thrown the towel in, sort of speaking. And she thought, "He's not himself." She would say, "Look, don't worry about this, and don't worry..." And the more that she said it, the more that I got tense. And the tenser I got. And then you would fall into depression. And I used to call them 'grey days'. I still call them 'grey days' - occasionally I have a 'grey day'. But I lift myself.

Debra - As a cancer patient you wake up every morning, not consciously thinking about the fact that you have cancer, but it's just there. And you really want to just shed that and get rid of that feeling.

John and Joy - In the early stages, if anything went wrong it did shake you up because you thought these things couldn't happen to you. But they do.

Peter - You live with that little bit of a fear. But what I went through - I don't think that I've got fear of it anymore now. If it happens, it happens. Because I've gone through it twice. I've just had a knee operation and I thought, "Well, it has got to be done." And if I do get cancer somewhere else, I'll just go in there and say "Burn it. Cut it. Get rid of it. And let me get on with my life."

John and Joy - I think it's an evil thing laying there, you know. Whether it takes me out or not, I don't know. But it's always lying there. You think about it.

Debra - I did start to feel a bit depressed about the bodily changes. I can remember my husband said, "You ought to go and join a group and talk to someone else about it." I was just so tired by the end of the day that I didn't feel I could go out and do anything extra, sort of during the day or at the end of the day. But I finally did go to a group called 'YOU', which is 'Young Ostomates United' and they are a group of men and women under the age of forty who have ostomies. So I walked into that room and I thought, "Well, what am I complaining about? Why am I feeling sorry for myself?" because really there were just so many other people.

Dennis - The people who were dying of cancer, had cancer, still got cancer. We'd sit around and discuss how we felt, what sort of symptoms we had and what ramifications and how it affected our lives. At the end of the session we would start to do some meditation and try and sort of place your mind on the disease and the problems. And after that I decided to take up meditation. It has helped me enormously.

John and Joy - In the age group of women that I get into, you know, the senior ladies which are mainly in our group - men and ladies - I don't think it is as bigger thing as it would be to the younger ones.

Debra - I used to think I had a pretty reasonable looking body. So to have it all sort of chopped about, I look like a railway track now, instead of a nice smooth abdomen. So initially



that was a real shock, you know, when Alexander was as I said seven months old. And I had time to sort of think a bit more, I suppose. So that's where the 'YOU' group helped, because I thought, "Well, why should I complain? There are people who are a lot younger than I am in this similar situation." Also Neil's attitude, he was very supportive, and he said, "I don't mind what you look like. You're still the same to me." So that was a great help.