

Real Time Health Pty Ltd
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Prostate Cancer: Chapter 5 of 6

Relationships

Dorothy and Patrick: It hasn't had much effect, as far as my family's concerned. They know that we've got it under control, so they're not concerned. As far as Dorothy and I are concerned, I became impotent which was a worry, naturally, as we were still quite active. Again, I went to the doctor and talked to him about that and he said, "I think there's something we can do for you there." He's put me on a medication which I inject, into the side of my penis which makes me not impotent for about a half an hour, so that we can enjoy the usual relationships without any trouble at all. And I just use that when we think we want to be chummy.

Robert: We discussed it and the main topic was that I didn't marry my wife for sex; I married her for companionship, the way she was. Sex is nice, but it's not the be all and end all. So, we discussed it and said, well, if the operation doesn't work, we'll find other means. Which, we have, and things have worked out well.

Ray: All of a sudden, the family knows that life is definitive. And until you're in that situation – although you know that life doesn't go on forever – you don't think about it.

Robert: My feeling is, and my wife went through hell. She visited me in hospital everyday and I don't think I showed my appreciation very well; just too selfish. My children visited me in hospital once. They seemed to have got over it much easier than what I personally had and my wife as well. I think we still worry about it occasionally.

Ray: Relationship has changed but in some ways we've possibly grown a little closer and a little more understanding and a little more forgiving, one might say that, for little things that crop up in life. But from a feeling point of view, from a personal point of view, yes, it has drastically changed. And she feels as though she has been cheated. I can understand that. She also understand that it's not my fault that this has happened. It's just one of those things in life – it's a bad penny that's turned up.

Robert: Even today, it still worries me that I never considered it. It worries me to speak about it, the tears come to my eyes. I still find it now such a sorry state of affairs that I was only worried about me. Sad part about it was, I even forgot my daughter's birthday. It was her 18th birthday, which seems to be.. it is an important birthday for a child. It completely slipped my mind. And even two years after the operation, it never came to my mind to ask, "What did you go through? How did the kids cope?"

Ray: As far as my wife is concerned, she accepts the fact that I have the cancer. She was very supportive during my treatment, and still is supportive. But she doesn't want to talk about it. She wants to enjoy whatever life we have left together, as much as possible. She's not interested in learning about it. She doesn't enjoy the fact that I am interested in it and involved in other things concerning support groups. So that we tread carefully in those directions.

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Richard: Get in with a good support group. I've found that's been very helpful. It gives you a positive outlook, and you realise that there are other people with the same problem. It can be a bit devastating; a lot of people do have a lot of problems. But you try to get those out of your mind.

Ray: It is interesting that the 6 or 7 fellows that we meet every month, and every one of us is metastatic, which is, it has escaped. We are all on a "time commitment". There is no cure for any of us. So, we live, and we enjoy meeting every month to discuss our pros and cons of our treatment. Of how we feel. We support one another very much.

Robert: I got so much support out of this group that this lady lead, that there was a requirement for a group to be set up for a prostate cancer specific.

Ray: It's a great help when you're down; it's a great help when you're up. We have a lot of fun. We laugh.

Robert: There was 7 original people setting up the group. I feel that even today, I get more out of being a part of this group, being able to tell other people how I'm coping – that there is hope.

Michael: I think probably the worst thing that you can do is try to keep it all to yourself. It's very important for people who have problems like that to discuss it with friends, etc. but of course you don't want burden your friends with it too much. Otherwise they're going to turn around and say, "My god, I wish you'd stop talking about prostate cancer. Why can't we talk about the latest movie we want to go and see. You know? Or where we went last night for dinner?" The best thing to do, really, is to discuss certain things and then forget about it and get on with your life in a normal way.