

Speaking from Experience Living with Osteoporosis USA

Transcript for Chapter 2 of 6: Impact on life

Shelley –

My life did change and that's been really tough because there are times when I have said to my husband, "I know that this is isn't what you signed on for, that you had hopes that when we retired that I might be able to do some kinda wild and crazy things, physical things that we've never done, together." And I kinda mourn that and I think he does too and it's been a balance of him kind of accepting that and us trying to work together to find what we can still do, that I can still do and that we can enjoy doing together. So that's been a real... it's an ongoing process.

Marti –

For my own safety, with a diagnosis of osteoporosis, I have changed the way I move. I hold on to rails, I look down when I go down the stairs instead of looking straight out, I check and make sure that the stairs are where they're supposed to be. When I'm walking across the street, instead of being oblivious I pay attention to what's underneath my feet. I've fallen on the darnedest thing, I fell on the yellow stripe down the middle of a two-lane highway because it had grease on it and I wasn't thinking about it. I just walked right onto it and my feet came out from under me. Fortunately that was not anything that was serious. It was loss of dignity more than anything else, that one. But that's a big one if you think about it. If you're used to just tearing up and down stairs without thinking about it and not really thinking about hanging on to the rails, when you have osteoporosis you need to do that.

Shelley –

When I have little missteps here and there, so far I've really been able to catch myself. And ya know, I don't think there's any guarantee for anybody of any age with or without the disease of not falling. I mean, people fall, people trip and fall. But I'm very aware of my surroundings. Mentally, I stay very aware of my surroundings and I don't try and rush necessarily. I take my time getting where I need to go – that's another beauty of being retired. And ya know, those kinds of things are just incredibly important.

Alan –

I'm really worried about falls so in order to prevent falls I'm sort of super careful. When I broke my leg we had a rug in the house. We've taken the rug and gotten rid of that so now we have just bare floors so there's nothing to catch. I'm starting to walk...well, I walked with a cane before...my balance...but a cane is important. I actually use a walker sometimes which is even safer than the cane.

Don –

Well, I think I'm a little more cautious than I used to be and I don't think it's a bad thing. I don't think it's...it really hasn't impacted my life that much.

Marti –

Osteoporosis has not changed my independence at all at this point in time. I still am extraordinarily independent. I go where I choose, I do it on my own and I hope to be able to do that for the next 20 years at least. But should it change well then I'll make the adjustments that have to be made, but right now I'm extraordinarily independent and so it has not affected me. Were I to be in a position where the osteoporosis became perhaps a little bit more pronounced, a little bit more dangerous, I might consider... instead of living on the 3rd floor and taking the stairs every day I might consider moving down to the 1st floor. But beyond that I can't imagine why it would affect my independence other than should I break bones and things of that sort, but those do heal even with osteoporosis.

Shelley –

I can travel by myself, but in order to do that I have to ask a lot of strangers for help and I'm not really good with that. I know that I...ya know, some people, it's easier for them. For me it's just hard because I still have this image of myself as being stronger in some ways than I am. So that's my own thing. I know a lot of people that do travel and, ya know with osteoporosis, even people that are in wheelchairs and so forth and they don't have any problem asking for help. So traveling is...if I had to pinpoint one thing that's really dramatically changed and that's been my enjoyment of travel.

Marti –

Instead of flinging boxes of supplies and climbing up and down ladders as I would have done a year ago without even thinking about it, now I ask my volunteers to do it.

Shelley –

I was working full-time in the library and I was...it involved lifting a lot of books. I was shelving books, getting books off the shelf, handling heavy things on a daily basis. So that became difficult. I did put out a little “help” for the upper...the kids in the 4th and 5th grades who were a little older and stronger and they didn’t know what was going on with me, but I just kind of went into asking them for more help. And the beauty of kids is they love it, ya know? They jump at the chance, they don’t ask why, they don’t say, “You never used to ask us for that.” They just...they love being helpful so that was really beautiful.