

Heart Attack Survivor: Jason

You know, that whole day I was just grumpy. I was just irritable. Something didn't feel right. I remember I started to feel a pain and burning in my chest and then my arms just really started hurting. It felt like I hit both funny bones, but really hard, and the pain just was not going away.

And the burning was just getting worse and worse. But I got really scared. Then I called 911 and said, I think I'm having heart problems. I had what's known as the widow maker, a heart attack, the lower descending artery was 100% blocked.

I probably had maybe a couple more minutes left to live. They put me under. I woke up, had two stents in my chest. I never like hospitals. Always had a fear of them. And here I was, living my greatest fear being in a hospital.

I became scared to eat because I wasn't sure if food was what caused it. I became scared to exercise because apparently that wasn't working. I really was scared to do my life the way I was doing it. I'm just a huge nerd as a whole.

I like superhero movies and sci-fi movies. It's not a very active lifestyle. A lot of nerds that I do know are out of shape, but you know, that goes for a lot of people.

I knew it was time to get my heart healthy. My cardiologist signed me up for cardiac rehab. They teach you just how to exercise again.

And I would just, do, you know, walk on a treadmill, do elliptical, you know, the first time I stepped on that treadmill? It was really scary.

Can my heart handle this? Like, am I ready for this? It was a good day to be able to have that confidence again to start running. After cardiac rehab, you know, I started running again, exercising. I used to go to this gym quite often and I called up and said, Hey, I'm ready to come back.

And the owner of the gym said, Why don't you try kickboxing? I love it. It's just something different, and it's different every time the person that I work with, they will do kicks will do different types of punches.

We do a lot of superhero analogies, Star Wars Jedi analogies. It is fun to think of that I'm fighting crime or fighting someone. Would joke about that punching, and I'm like, Oh, you want this and I didn't see your friend back here.

It's really motivating to be working out, but incorporating that nerd lifestyle or analogies into our workouts. Started doing cosplay, I think about three or four years ago. I did some research to find out how to join the Star Wars cast clubs.

They've always visited children's hospitals. I knew it was something that I wanted to get involved with. Just to say thank you to the medical community, but also bring joy to a place that needs it. I just remember when I was in the hospital, it was scary to be alone. I didn't see a familiar face.

Now, when I go to hospitals, am I a familiar face? I kind of am because people know Obi-Wan Kenobi. It's interactive. So we asked them questions, you know, think of happy thoughts.

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There is a Jedi Force training component that will just teach them how to breathe, how to think of the conscious now and not about the past or the future, just to be present. What the script does is just teaches them how to deal with their stress.

I never let my heart attack define me, I defined my heart attack. What I do now to celebrate my life and that I'm still here, is on the anniversary of my heart attack. I remind people that it's May 29th.

It's time for you to pick up the phone right now and call your doctor and schedule your annual physical. Whether you run ten miles a day or smoke ten cigarettes a day, you don't know what's going on on the inside.