

Heart Health: Where Will You Be in 5 Years?

[Ron] "Five years ago, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure.

That might not worry some people ... but it worried me ... because of my dad.

I remember very well how Dad dealt with his high blood pressure.

He didn't. The doctor gave him a prescription, but he never filled it.

He was too heavy, but he went on eating the same way ...

not exercising ... not trying to lose weight.

He wouldn't take it seriously. 'Don't worry,' he'd say. 'I'm strong as a bull!' He was 54 when he died. He had a massive heart attack at work.

I didn't even get to say goodbye.

Dad was a pretty smart guy.

He just didn't understand how dangerous high blood pressure could be.

I miss my dad ... and I wish he had done things differently.

I'm the same age now as my dad was when he died.

I learned a lot from him, including how important family is.

One thing he taught me was to learn from other people's mistakes.

So when I was diagnosed with high blood pressure, I started taking the medicine.

It's one thing I can do to help me live a healthier life.

I try to eat healthy and work out regularly too.

I'm not always perfect ... I slip up sometimes ...

but then I think about how my dad would want me to do better ...

and I think about the example I'm setting for my kids.

I'm grateful to my dad ... because he motivated me to take care of myself ...

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for me and my family."

[JoAnn] "I volunteer at our senior center once a week ...

and the thing I enjoy most is getting to know the different women who come in.

I have this one friend, Eve, who has to use a scooter.

She's a dear person, but she mostly talks about her health issues, her doctors, and the stroke she had a few years ago.

And then there's Christy.

She's older than Eve, but she's fit and active.

She talks about the online classes she's taking ... or her exercise class ...

or flying off to visit her grandchildren.

I've been thinking about those women ... because I have a choice to make.

My doctor says that between my weight, my habits, and my health history, I could be headed for a heart attack or stroke.

That was hard to hear.

I mean, I know I don't exercise enough or eat as healthy as I should.

I know I'm too heavy. But it's hard to change.

Well, Christy told me that she used to be overweight ...

and she had a heart attack in her 60s.

That's when she changed her life.

She admits it wasn't easy.

She did it by making one healthy change at a time, until slowly she got where she wanted to be.

When I see Eve and Christy, I feel like I'm looking at two versions of my future ...

and I know which version I want.

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Of course, thinking about change is one thing.

Making it happen is something else.

But now I know I can't put it off any longer.

So I'm using Christy's plan.

I'm not trying to do everything at the same time.

I started with one change I thought I could succeed at: being more active.

On days when that's hard, I think, 'Just one thing.' That's my motto.

I even put it on my refrigerator, next to a picture of Christy. It keeps me going.

I plan to retire in 5 years ... and I want a healthy future waiting for me."