

Life's Curveballs



It all started December 3rd, 2021.

My husband Chris (our VP of Anger Management) was wheezing so I talked him into going to the walk-in clinic. He's not crazy about doctors and getting him to the ER during a pandemic was unthinkable. He hasn't been sick in so long I can't remember.

The clinic diagnosed him with pneumonia because of fluid in his lungs and sent him home with steroids and antibiotics for 10 days.

On day 9 I could not take it anymore. He was not getting better. I insisted we go back in.

This time they also took an EKG.

They came back in and said he needed to get to an ER ASAP. They were willing to call the ambulance.

Then the nightmare began.

Turned out he was in serious AFib. His heart rate was 150 – 160. He never felt it. He was in congestive heart failure. After a series of tests, they announced that only 10% of his heart was working. He was admitted.

By December 23 they decided his issues were now too big for them to handle. They insisted he be transferred to Nashville to a bigger hospital with more equipment, more expertise and more options.

We spent Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day and even my birthday on Jan 10 in the hospital.

They did tests during that time to find out if his body was strong enough for heart surgery. On New Year's Eve they discovered stage 3 cancer in his right kidney and stage 2 in his left. No symptoms at all!

Chris and I have a new understanding of how closely linked heart and kidney issues are. When your kidneys are not properly filtering your blood, your body goes into overdrive to increase blood flow to the kidneys and back to the heart. That raises the heart rate a LOT and increases the workload on your heart...

As Plan Z fans you'll find this interesting. They also sent a camera down his chest to look at his heart. When they reported out they were amazed. They said he didn't need a stent; in fact, he didn't need bypass surgery at all. They said his heart was amazingly healthy except it would not pump correctly. They told us his "diet" must be amazing because there were no clogs at all that they'd normally see in a 71 year old.

The cancer news was a shock, though. So no Happy New Year.

Since then, Chris had surgery to remove $\frac{1}{2}$ of one of his kidneys. His other kidney will likely get surgery around the end of February. Then we'll figure out what to do about his heart. The cancer has to be dealt with first.

I tell you all of this just to give you a head's up that I've been rather...busy. And since so many of you have spoken with

Chris over the years, I thought you should know what's going on. You can stay connected to Chris and read updates about his recovery through the CaringBridge website we've set up for him. Here's the link: <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/chrislytle>.

Chris and I are now living in a two bedroom, furnished apartment in Nashville. We need to stay here for his care for some time.

We have our cats with us, so it feels a teeny bit like "home."

I look forward to being able to get back to beautiful Chattanooga and a more normal life.

Life sure does hand out curveballs.

Cheers,