

Kathy's Story

KATHY: My name is Kathy and I was diagnosed with lupus in 2006.

VERONICA: My name is Veronica and I'm Kathy's sister.

KATHY: What I liked to do before I was diagnosed with lupus, I used to travel quite a bit and I liked to cook. I'm somewhat of a foodie. And I had lived a very active lifestyle.

It seemed like it was sudden at the time that I was diagnosed but in retrospect I think I was displaying some of the classic symptoms. But the day that finally drove me to the hospital was when I had some blisters in my mouth. I went to an urgent care first and that's when they told me that my platelets were dangerously low and I spent a few days in critical care until they got my platelets up. I was actually diagnosed three weeks later.

I had a particularly rough time right after I was diagnosed because the symptoms were severe and it impacted my work. I was teaching at the time and I could not do that anymore.

I thought that that was going to end all working for me, but I was able to reinvent myself and find something that I can still do in spite of the lupus. So what I do is mediate open adoption agreements and what makes it very good for me is that I set my own time with clients so I can go in the evening, I can go on Saturdays, whenever.

We have changed roles in my household tremendously. I have turned from being the caregiver to needing some care from my children. And they've been invaluable in helping me. And in fact I don't know what I would do without them.

VERONICA: When I found out she had lupus at first I didn't quite understand the extent of it. Then when I did find out and she made me painfully aware that...oh, this is more serious than I thought, so, it was real shocking.

We like talking and if there's something that we can talk through about, you know, her condition she gets the chance to tell me the things that are going on. And, you know, everybody needs someone to listen.

KATHY: And it's invaluable when you have someone that understands, just believing you when you say that's as much as I can do. I can't go here or there right now, I need to rest, and understand that and not think you're just sloughing off. That's invaluable.

VERONICA: I respect her days when she's down and love the days when she's up. And I think that if you live for the moment and do the right thing toward one another, you will really have a lot to treasure actually; because you treasure each day.

