



**Ur Story Tellers Foundations Inc.
Promoting Healing and Recovery with Storytelling**

Visit: urstorytellers.com - Call: 267-551-0939
Email: urstorytellers.info@gmail.com

READ ONE OF OUR PARTICIPANT'S HEALING STORY:

Frogleggs4- MY TESTIMONY (YOU DON'T KNOW MY STORY)

I thank God for his abundant mercies in allowing me to still be here in the land of the living. Having gone through a quadruple heart bypass and still in recovery I wanted to share my experience with those who are not aware of the situations that led to the operation and the process of recovery. I've given bits and pieces of my experience on FB and to those caring friends who either liked my posts or made comments I deeply appreciate your prayers and concern. I've lived most of my life relatively healthy having never been in a hospital for any health reason.

Although in recent years I developed diabetes and high blood pressure and maintaining them through medication. I've faithfully attended all of my doctor visits through the years to stay on top of my health. In February of this year when I visit my doctor he informed me of my last cardiogram. With a look of concern he said the readings of the test showed an irregular graph and suggested I see a cardiologist to take a stress test to be on the safe side. Not hesitating I booked a visit the next week with the cardiologist took the stress test but the findings were inconclusive.

He informed me of taking a cardio catechization procedure which would accurately reveal what's going on in my heart. With the knowledge of my family history of heart problems primarily on my father's side(he and my uncles all died of heart disease),I followed through on taking the procedure. The results proved to be bad news in that I had clogged arteries through 85 percent of my heart. I'll be honest, fear was gripping my heart about the news for as I stated my father and uncles died from heart disease and all were in their early 60's age wise and left here a few years apart from each other.

My dad was 62 when he died in 1996 and I was approaching my 60th birthday this year. The closer I got to my father's age the more I wondered would it happen to me? I got my answer however unpleasant it was but it motivated me to follow through with doing what's necessary to continue my life.

Going through the catechization procedure was no problem but it was afterwards in recovery where I learn how painful it can be when doctors came to press on the area of my groin where the procedure took place. I was told I needed a bypass operation and accepted it without hesitation. When released later that day while accompanied with my wife I began to feel lightheaded and weak so by the time I approached outside the main lobby I found myself going down to the ground.

It seemed like slow-motion as I collapsed but fortunately a woman was there to help me and call others to assist. At that time also my wife was in the process of getting the car but was told quickly what had happen and came back. They put me in a wheelchair and took me to emergency for observation.

The problem was lack of food and medication during the procedure and being on my back throughout. I had to stay overnight which my first experience was being in the hospital. The bypass operation was to take place on March 24th on a Monday 3 days before my 60th birthday.

The amazing thing during this experience was I didn't have any of the symptoms associated with heart problems such as chest pains or shortness of breath. I felt alright or so I thought but thank God

I followed through on each step to know what was really wrong with me. On Sunday the day before the operation at church we had a great service and I gave my praise to God.

Although I don't consider myself the dancing type I danced before the Lord with the thought if this was going to be my last day on earth I wanted to give it all I got to HIM. The next day I had to be at Albert Einstein Medical Center at 6am, my wife was with me as I went through the paperwork to prepare for the operation.

I was taken to the waiting room for operation on a gurney where other patients like me were being held in numbered spaces. The surgeon who was in charge of my operation arrived and I asked him what type of bypass procedure would be taken.

He said in a matter of fact way that it would be an quadruple bypass operation. I was taken back by that for I've heard of single or double bypass but "quadruple"? This sounds quite extensive I thought. Also I was told that a vein from my right leg would be taken out to be grafted to my heart as a new valve for the blood to go through bypassing the clogged arteries.

After being put under by anesthesia I went through 3 hours of operation and when awoken learned that it was successful thank God. Stayed in the hospital for 5 days was put on a liquid diet the first few days then solid food for the remainder of my stay. Also a physical therapist was assigned to me on the third day to get me out to walk down the hallway for exercise.

I found out how amazing I took walking for granted when dealing with the difficulty of taking that first step. I also was given a breathing apparatus to use to blow through in lifting a little ball as high as I could to help clear my lungs.

Like walking, trying to breath was another difficulty taken for granted that I had to learn. When I came home it was a matter of adjustment and time to deal with recovery for I wasn't strong enough to climb the steps or pick up no more than 5 pounds of weight.

I remember my surgeon telling me that I might experience tightness around my chest because it was large and he was right. Also there was a skin rash over my chest at the area of my heart which was irritating me whenever I put on a shirt or pullover top. I had to use anti-bacteria ointments to relieve it.

Many times I have to hold out my top away from my body so not to feel the irritation on my skin because of the rash. I thank God that I accumulated a lot of sick leave during my many years at the Post Office so I had more than enough to still be paid my regular salary while being away from work. Also early during my recovery I had to keep a pillow nearby in case I sneezed. By applying the pillow to my chest this would muffled the pain that occur on the incision for it was still healing. I thank my wife, Suffragan Bishop Brenda Cuthbertson for being there for me when I couldn't do for myself during those early weeks of recovery.

She had to clothe, wash and feed me my meals and I'm ever thankful for her love and concern. By May I was able to start driving again and attended cardio rehab for exercising and building stamina. Although when riding in the car prior to driving was an adventure in that I could feel every bump the car would go over jarring discomfort over my chest.

From time to time I would have some swelling in my ankles and feet and had to elevate them to relieve the swelling. Also the right leg where the vein was taken out sometimes had a numbing sensation similar to what amputees would call "phantom pain". My cardiologist assured me this is temporary.

All of this is part of the healing process I'm going through and I'm progressing daily. 4 months after my surgery I was able to go back to work in early July and I praise God for His continual healing touch. Like the song, "I May Not Look Like What I Been Through", but God is bringing me to the place He wants me to be.