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KAT'S INTERVIEW SERIES: T. DAVID THOMPSON, LONG-TIME MEMBER OF CO-OP, DISCUSSES ALZHEIMER'S AND MORE

T. David Thompson is one of our not-so-shy members. He has given us some invaluable (and sometimes painful) feedback along the way, ranging from web page comments and product recommendations to, gasp, fussing about kat humor!

T. David shrugs that earlier comment off, admitting he likes the kat stuff just fine now. He even confessed to having had calicos and raising Doberman Pinschers once upon a time.

In any event, since he stopped lobbying for my demise and I stopped calling him a curmudgeon, we have chatted amiably about far-ranging things, from science to spirituality.

However, the most touching has been T. David's dedication to supporting his wife -- as Alzheimer's tightened its nasty grip on her brain.

Here's where we started in our interview. I asked T. David; who lives in Alamogordo, New Mexico; to tell me more about himself.

"I was once was a physician in ancient Egypt."

After sharing a laugh with me, he went on:

"I've always been interested in medicine, especially microsurgery, which is fascinating to watch. I've been putting together medical articles for more than 20 years. I see part of my role in this life as sharing my research and experiences with others."

T. David was trained as an electrical engineer and laments the constant focus on mechanical models and looking for "magic bullet" drugs in the conventional medicine system.

As an engineer, T. David sees the body more from an electrical perspective and admires Eastern practitioners who treat the whole being.

Don't be fooled into thinking he's a softy though. Like this kat, he can be more than a bit ornery (just ask him about his tangle with a couple of neurologists over his wife's treatment!).

T. David battled long and hard to keep his wife, Carolyn, at home, but finally had to put her in a nursing home in February 2004, after she suffered another "mini" stroke from a blood clot. He said:

"Unfortunately, the hospital emergency room team chose not to risk a simple injection of tPA to try to dissolve the brain clot (even after verifying with a CT-scan that there was no bleeding). The stroke clot remained and she could no longer live independently."

For those of you who don't know, tPA stands for "tissue plasminogen activator," one of the thrombolytic agents that bust blood clots.

Since 1996, tPA has been approved for the treatment of both stroke and heart attack. According to the American Heart Association, if tPA is given within the first 3 hours of a stroke, it may reduce permanent disability. If given within 12 hours of the onset of a heart attack, the person has a better chance for survival and recovery.

For a link discussing the relationship between tPA and Alzheimer's:

<http://www.alzheimersupport.com/library/showarticle.cfm/ID/1436/e/1/T/Alzheimers/>

Meanwhile, T. David stressed:

"Don't be afraid to go nose to nose with health care professionals, especially in ER settings. They are so busy, you have to be a really strong advocate to get anywhere."

In addition to strokes and Alzheimer's, T. David's wife was diagnosed with bladder cancer in January of 2003, and her oncologist typically recommended chemo and radiation to treat a massive tumor, even though he believed that stage 2 or 3 cancer would remain.

T. David opted to work more holistically and administer a serious immune system "detox regime" to his wife. He notes that within three months, her cancer had cleared, all without the damaging effects of chemo and radiation to her total body (cells, circulatory system, etc.).

When I asked how he was doing personally, after going through so much, T. David responded:

"I'm ambivalent about her being gone. I'm relieved that I don't have to watch her every minute at home, especially with the problems I had in controlling her the last couple of months. I miss the Carolyn I used to know; but that personality is gone for good, now. It's sad."

We talked about support systems and he shared:

"At first, I attended meetings sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association. I quickly realized that I really should have gone six months earlier. The materials they have are excellent. Now, I attend a local support group once a week.

I'm a pretty independent guy, but there's nothing like hearing others' stories."

We turned to selection of nursing homes and T. David shared his personal check list:

"In Alamogordo, I researched the three nursing homes and chose Casa Arena Blanca and have been very satisfied with the actual caregivers and the way the facility is maintained. However, I've twice caught the nursing staff over-ordering her drugs, which we have to pay for. So, I cancelled any further ordering from their contract pharmacy and am now buying them myself locally and at only half price."

"Still, you need to insist on checking medical records. Mistakes can creep in, even with the best care, so you have to educate yourself about conditions and treatments and then insist on what you want and don't want done. You'd be surprised how often duplicate tests get ordered or the wrong drugs get prescribed, especially in the hospital."

"For example, when it comes to tranquilizers, Haldol is the absolute worst drug you can give someone with mental problems; it creates permanent personality change on top of what already exists. I believe that Ativan is a much more appropriate tranquilizer for an Alzheimer's patient."

"There are more mundane things that you have to consider early on, like getting a durable power of attorney and a long-term care insurance policy - while a person can still pass a mental exam by a nurse examiner."

Our conversation turned to alternative medicine in general, and T. David got feisty again.

"I don't do sports at all, but when carrying weight, I started to notice chest pain back in 2000. I went to my doctor, who put me through a tortuous treadmill stress test. Afterwards, he put me on the statin drug, Lipitor. I thought they were going to kill me. Every muscle in my body ached."

"Then my doctor, along with two cardiologists, recommended that I have an angioplasty. I actually told all of them to 'stuff it.' I consider an angioplasty not only a highly-overpriced and risky procedure, but also a temporary measure at best."

"I fired my old medical team; I found an Oriental-trained, East Indian doctor who works more holistically; and I also boned up on arterial sclerosis myself."

"I am living proof that Linus Pauling had it right 50 years ago. Vitamin C with lysine and proline corrects causal inflammation as well as dissolving plaques. At first, I was mixing up my own blend, but then I started buying Heart Plus from the Co-op (grinding up the tablets). Four years later, I'm happy to report that I'm doing well."

In closing, I asked T. David my standard questions about the Co-op. T. David was quite generous when he said:

"It's clear you're constantly doing your homework and you're doing a beautiful job in educating about the science behind new ingredients. I'm glad that you've added [acetyl-L-carnitine](#) and [phosphatidylserine](#). They're good additions for brain health. Keep on doing what you're doing!"

Fair members, the role of caregiver in a family is often terribly unappreciated. T. David's commitment to and efforts on behalf of his wife, Carolyn, touched us deeply and even struck us as heroic. May you all have such good support in your lifetimes!

Now, it's time to close this interview, so if you would like to write to T. David Thompson, you may reach him at: tdthompson@zianet.com.

Tell him the "kat" sent you! ^..^

That's it for now. Time to scat. ^..^

Still purringly yours,

Guido

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