



Bill Rasmussen: Embrace Early Engagement

I've told the story about getting fired from the New England Whalers and founding ESPN countless times. To athletes. To college students. But since my diagnosis with PD in 2014, the story I share is much different. Whatever the story may be, I share my truth in the hopes of helping just one person. I'm an optimist. And that's my measure of success. Life isn't about the obstacles you may encounter, it's how you figure out a way around them. I think of my Parkinson's this way. My diagnosis was a relief. Ultimately, I thought it was better to know my disease, to give it a name and to meet the challenge head on.

I remember telling my friend Mike Soltys, a vice president at ESPN (I hired him years earlier as an intern!), well, maybe we can help somebody — Mike, what do you think? And so he assigned a writer, we talked about it for a few weeks and got it together, and he said, you know, if just one person is helped, that'd be great. And I heard from people all over the world. Believe it or not, I had responses from Denmark. I guess because Rasmussen is the biggest name in Denmark. There are more Rasmussens there than anywhere else.

Everybody had their own approach to how they were going to take care of it. I can't say anybody is happy with Parkinson's, but many feel at peace with where they are, and they're determined to make the best of it. They all emphasize exercise. One way or another, everybody has a different regimen. That doesn't mean my way is better than your way or Joseph's is better than Clyde's, but keep moving, keep walking, keep exercising,

stretching. I played baseball and softball for a number of years and I was a catcher, which is really tough on the knees and the legs. When I can't get into the catcher's position, then I'll know my legs are really around the way out! But I think that's only because I exercise. Wake up, make the bed, exercise, eat breakfast. I go for a walk and that's fine. I don't have a job that I have to go to. Fortunately, I'm too old! Nobody will have me at my age. I make doctor appointments, stay connected to friends and exercise on my daily walks. Reframing life's challenges also has been a constant.

The obstacles in my life won't stop — and I won't let them stop me. I've fallen a few times in recent years. My doctor and I made workarounds to address this and I accept it for what it is. But other than that, everything is good. I still grumble at my computer. I still enjoy meeting new people. And I continue to be grateful that I can share my story. I hope my life story can help more people — even just one more person.

MJFF Patient Council member Bill Rasmussen, 87, diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2014, is using his inspirational life story and good humor to encourage others with PD to stay active and get involved in the community — and to embrace participation in research to speed better treatments and a cure.



The Foundation is grateful to ESPN for making our partnership with Bill Rasmussen possible.

A Golden Opportunity to Speed the Cure: Your First Year with Parkinson's

The first few months and years following a Parkinson's disease (PD) diagnosis can be overwhelming. Few people think about participating in clinical trials during this time. But people in this fleeting window are in a unique position to contribute to research and help scientists capture the full continuum of Parkinson's. **Below are six key facts.**

1 Studying the earliest stages of PD is critical to speeding a cure

Especially before you start Parkinson's medication, scientists need your partnership to understand, measure, prevent, slow and stop the disease. Your participation in research can help researchers gain tremendous insights into early disease processes that may be our best hope to slow or stop the progression of PD (something no currently available treatment can do).

4 Participation brings risks and benefits

Not all studies test a new drug; many collect data and samples to better understand the biology of PD. Some test exercise, physiotherapy or other non-invasive treatments. While some risks are inherent in research, participation may also bring benefits. Some people say they gain a sense of control over their disease. Research could also offer more time with Parkinson's experts and early access to emerging treatments.

2 There is a study (or several) for you

Interested in participating in online research? Join Fox Insight, MJFF's online clinical study where people with and without Parkinson's share information that could transform the search for better treatments. Register at foxinsight.org.

5 Your safety is top priority

Safeguards are in place to minimize risk in research trials. Researchers must have all study plans and materials approved by an outside committee of experts and must monitor for and report any undesirable changes in a person's health throughout the course of the research.

3 Many patients regret missing this window of opportunity

The Michael J. Fox Foundation regularly hears from people with PD who did not come to understand soon enough that their early participation in research held particular value to the development of cures. Many wish they had asked their doctor for information on research participation, or learned sooner about the Foundation's trial finder tool (michaeljfox.org/trial-finder) that matches individuals to studies that need them.

6 There are many ways to find trials and studies

Start by asking your doctor about opportunities for research participation, but also look to your support group or your PD community for referrals. You can register online with the Foundation's Fox Trial Finder (see link above) to be matched with recruiting trials.