

**“Going Without Knowing”**  
**Dealing with Critical and Chronic Health Issues**  
**Media Interview Questions**  
**Nancy Kaltenberger: 970-219-9768**

**(1) Nancy...We are going to talk about “*Critical and Chronic Health Issues*”...I would venture to say it’s probably not a subject matter handled that often outside the Doctor’s office. What stirs your passion on this particular subject?**

I feel strongly that everyone, each of us without exception, travels down a “Going Without Knowing” highway in life...and by way of different avenues we all, at some point in our journey, either personally, or at least first hand, through loved ones or friends, are exposed to critical and chronic health issues.

When you think about a person who is ill for only a short time, maybe someone who has gone through surgery and has been out of commission for 4 or 5 weeks; for that time frame...short though it may be...there is an undeniable tendency to lean toward the negative and be self absorbed. (I’ve known people with an everyday, run of the mill cold who become absolutely unbearable and unapproachable because their nose is running and their throat is sore, people who will wear you out complaining about a stubbed toe or a hang nail. We are pretty wimpy people when it comes to the inconvenience of not feeling our best!) So if you combine that reality with the lives of people who have life-long and life-threatening illnesses that they deal with daily, then you begin to get a complete picture...a picture of the ugly and relentless secondary disease that holds the chronically ill person captive...the thief that steals their joy, their enthusiasm and effectiveness. Every chronic physical health issue that you can name is not only accompanied by but complicated by depression. Depression is common in patients with heart and lung problems, people with cancer, stroke survivors, people with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, diabetes, Arthritis, and Fibromyalgia. Even people who suffer from chronic migraine headaches deal with depression. I believe, more often than not, the depression, the hopelessness becomes the real disability.

**(2) So in your opinion, chronic and critical illness is one issue and the depression that accompanies the illness is another?**

Absolutely....Depression is an issue, an illness in and of itself that comes alongside and aggravates the initial problem, especially if the primary condition causes pain, fatigue, or a disruption in day-to-day function. Depression makes pain hurt more. It causes lethargy that can intensify the loss of energy in many chronic conditions. Depression makes people withdraw into isolation. AND it impairs the immune system which can hurt the body’s efforts to combat chronic illness.

**(3) Nancy, you have traveled down your own personal “Going without Knowing” journey with regard to chronic and critical illness, have you not?**

Yes, I was born with a life-long and life-threatening illness that I've been running with and running from for as long as I can remember. When I was a child the doctors knew there was something wrong with the rhythm of my heart. They didn't really know what to do with that information but they were able to identify a problem. In high school I started having episodes when my heart would race and beat erratically. I was short of breath and dizzy...and sometimes I would just fall over in a faint. We didn't run to the doctor then like we do now so the first time I spoke with a doctor about it was when I was 18 years old and expecting my first child. He told me he thought I had a heart murmur. He pointed his finger at me and said, "We'll have to keep an eye on that." I didn't speak to anyone about it again until I was expecting my second child and that doctor said, "No, it's not a murmur...it's some kind of arrhythmia...and we're going to have to keep an eye on that." Seven years down the road I was expecting my third child and I visited the doctor again. By that time, my heart condition was so volatile that my doctor actually sat me down and counseled me about ending the pregnancy. He felt my heart wasn't strong enough to carry the baby full-term and that my life and my baby's life was at risk.

**(4) And how did you reach a decision? What was the outcome?**

My decision was based on believing that God knew my road. He knew every bend, every dip, and every tunnel. He not only knew my road, He had scouted it out before me. Deut. 1:30 says, "The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you!" God has in the past and will continue to in the future "carry us" on all our rough roads, "like a father carries a child." I carried that child to term and my daughter's red hair and blue eyes were a delightful surprise as was her gender and she was for me, as far as my illness, an altar that God built up in my life to glorify Him...Every time I look at her, I am reminded that God is in control and He is fighting for me.

**(5) How has your illness impacted your life since that time?**

It has been constant. It's been relentless. It's been overwhelming and all-consuming. Heart arrhythmias aren't that uncommon. The unusual aspect for me was that we couldn't find a medication that would help for any length of time. Because my heart was not in rhythm, I was at high risk for heart attack, stroke, and sudden death. I did, in fact, have a heart attack. I've struggled with congestive heart and lung failure. I had a massive cerebral hemorrhage, so large it shifted my brain stem. An experimental arrhythmia medication caused Fibrosis in my lungs and liver damage. So the impact of my illness has been catastrophic. My condition worsens with age, so I face the reality of dying every day.

**(6) How do you cope? How do you deal with the fear and depression?**

Well, first of all, somewhere along the way I realized that everybody is dying. I was and am no different than anyone else. As soon as we're born we all begin the dying process. Even though I have been medically defined as terminal, it is God Almighty, no one else, who holds life and death.

I realized something else as well... And as long as I have breath, my window of opportunity is open and it's crucial that I focus on making whatever time I have left count for eternity's sake.

On my own I don't handle the fear and depression well at all. It sneaks up on me and gets me in a choke hold quite often. But I can tell you this...I have learned that Satan's best shot..his best strategy is a hammer and whatever wedge we decide to surrender to him. The wedge might be doubt or disappointment. It might be discouragement, unforgiveness, stubbornness. It might be selfishness. It might be guilt or regret.

Or the wedge we hand over to Satan might be fear, anxiety, and depression. That wedge...whatever it is, can and will separates you from the Savior. And if the evil one can hammer it in deep enough it will be the thing that destroys you...the roadblock that stops you in your tracks...impedes your effectiveness...halts your progress spiritually *and* physically.

Isaiah 40:31 says, 'But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'

So to answer your question...The way to *cope* is to hang on to *hope*.

**(7) As far as advice from someone who is not only familiar with but travels daily on such a precarious "Going without Knowing" road, what would you like to leave with our audience today?**

That's a hard one...There's so much I want to say....Tell you what, I often use a little acrostic that I think will work for my final challenge....We've established that we're all on our own particular "Going without Knowing" journey...so let's take the word **TRIP**...short and sweet...Using the word **TRIP** as an acrostic will help you remember the essence of my message.

**T**ap into God's Power. Ephesians 3:20 tells us that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...because of His great power. Remember that without Him we can do nothing..but we can do all things through His strength and power.

**R**eflect on God's Promises. Jeremiah 29:11 comforts us with the promise that God indeed has a plan for our lives.

**I**nitiate the Passion. Focus on your ministry and your mission. Do what you can do for the glory of God and do it with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind....ALL your passion.

**P**ress on. Press on toward the mark of God's high calling. Even with our flaws, even with our imperfections and problems, God can use us. Our job is to be available and to keep on keeping on...Press on.

Tap into God's Power, Reflect on God's Promises, Initiate the Passion and Press On!

That's the medicine..that's the therapy we all need as we battle our fear, our pain, and our depression. Refocus...Regroup...and Rejoice because as born-again believers we are traveling with the King..the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and His way...His route is paved in Hope for the journey.

Book: *Hope When the River Rages- A Journey of Risk and Rescue, Struggle and Strength, Fear and Faith*

Contact Nancy for Speaking: 970-219-9768