



What was your initial reaction when diagnosed on February 6th 1986?
(two weeks before your 39th birthday)



The two year prognosis didn't seem too unfair though , I had been in a loving, but open, relationship for the last 18 years.



a job I loved, a whole group of loving friends and a beautiful 17th century home.



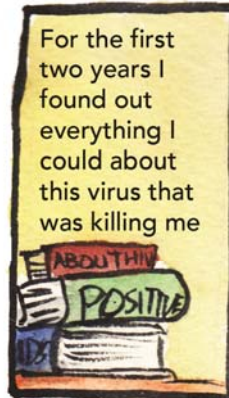
I was comforted by the fact that I had at least had a life.

Illustrated by Graham Johnson
<http://cargocollective.com/mrgjohnson>

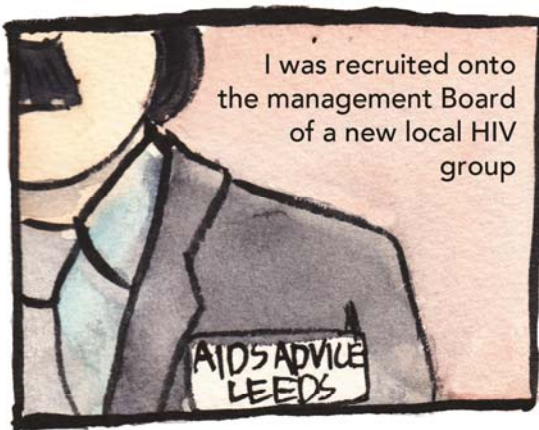
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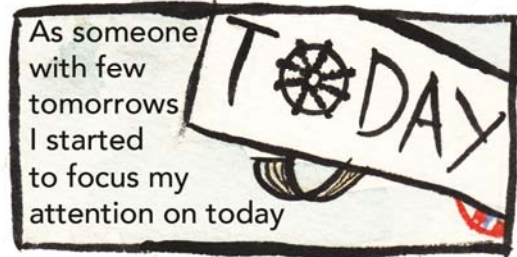
If you could give yourself one piece of advice back then, what would it have been?



1986 - 1988



In May 1986 I came out about my HIV status to other Board members at AIDS Advice and in June 1986 we opened our own Body Positive Group.



1986	1993	2000	2007
1987	1994	2001	2008
1988	1995	2002	2009
1989	1996	2003	2010
1990	1997	2004	2011
1991	1998	2005	2012
1992	1999	2006	2013
			2014

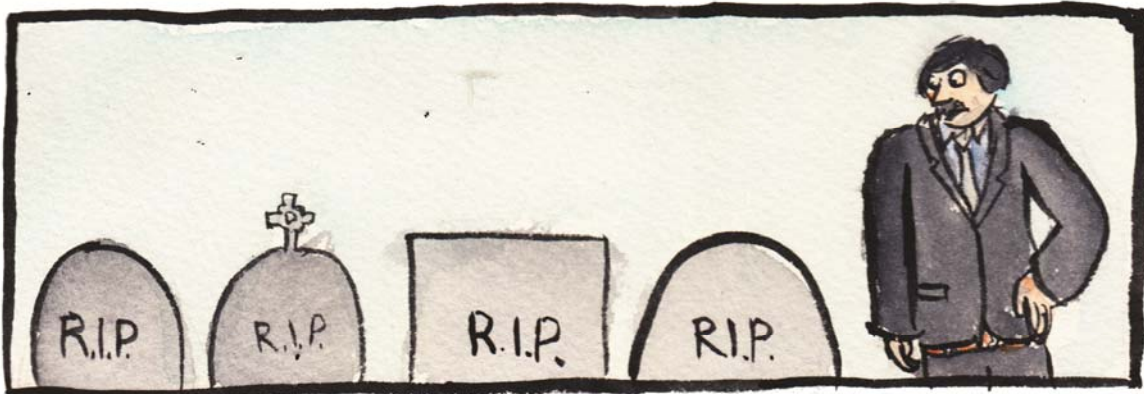
Having survived the two years of my prognosis, I then lived seventeen, one year at a time.

I embarked on this shortened journey of life, trying to "put" everything into it. It seemed the perfectly natural thing to do BUT there is a poem I discovered which suggests that maybe I shouldn't have been so desperate to do so.

1980s
1 2 3 4 5 6 7



What are your positive ~~and negative~~ experiences regarding your HIV diagnosis ?



I think I came in time to realise that this diagnosis had provided me with the most wonderful opportunity. I have learnt so much more about myself and the death of 99% of my peer group has forced me to make a journey I never would have made. I have met the most wonderful people imaginable.



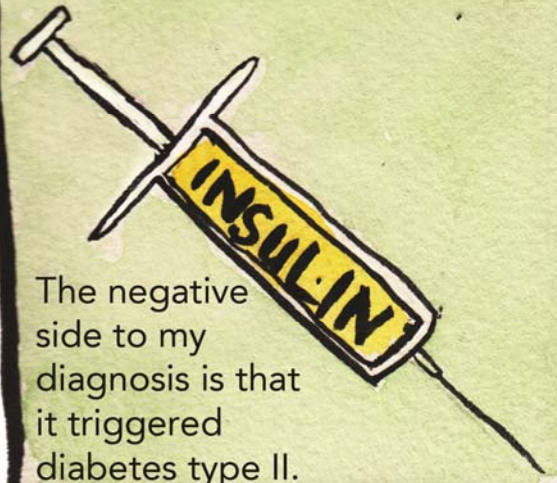
I firmly believe that without this diagnosis and the journey it has led me to make I really would be a boring narrow minded old fart.



1990s




What are your positive and negative experiences regarding your HIV diagnosis?

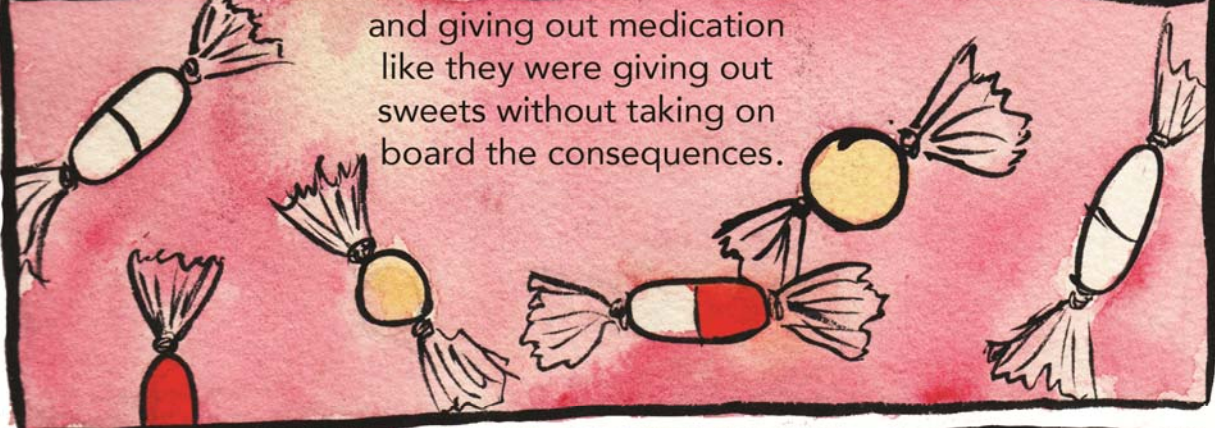


The negative side to my diagnosis is that it triggered diabetes type II.


This caused all sorts of problems with consultants not looking at the whole picture



and giving out medication like they were giving out sweets without taking on board the consequences.



On a positive note it's giving me the chance to try and make a difference



so that other people in similar situations



don't have to go through the same thing.

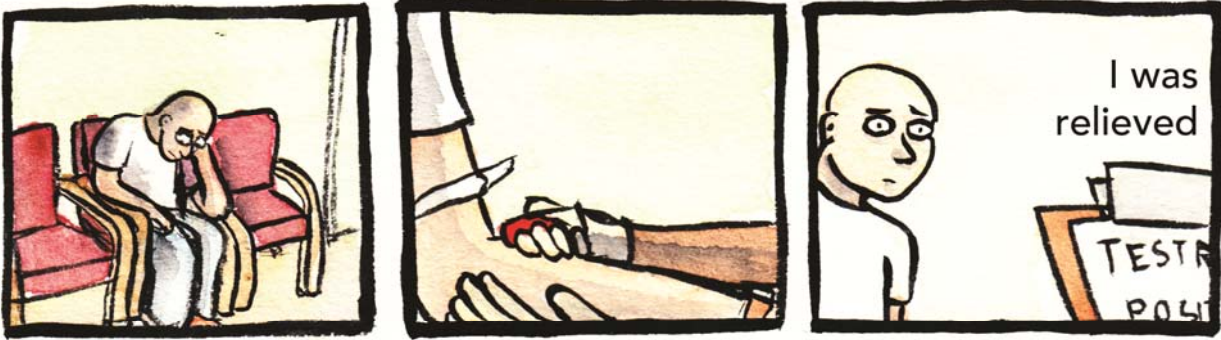


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What was your first thought when you were diagnosed in 2003?



I had been unwell for sometime and knew that something in my body wasn't right. Therefore I decided to go and have a screening for STIs and HIV.

Knowing my status meant that I could go onto treatment, the virus becomes undetectable and I was not infectious to other people.

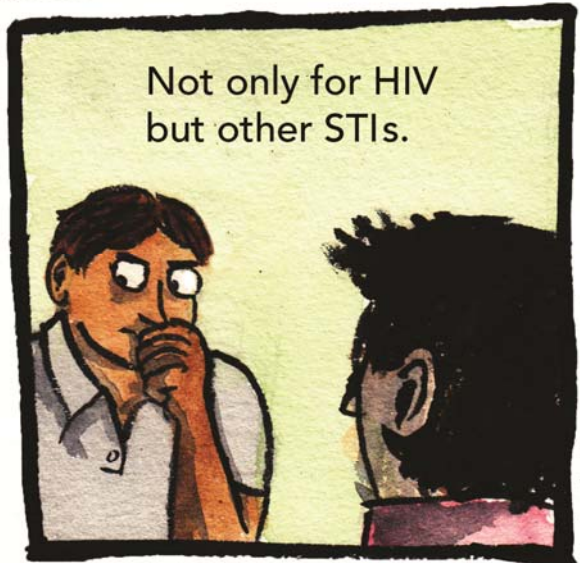
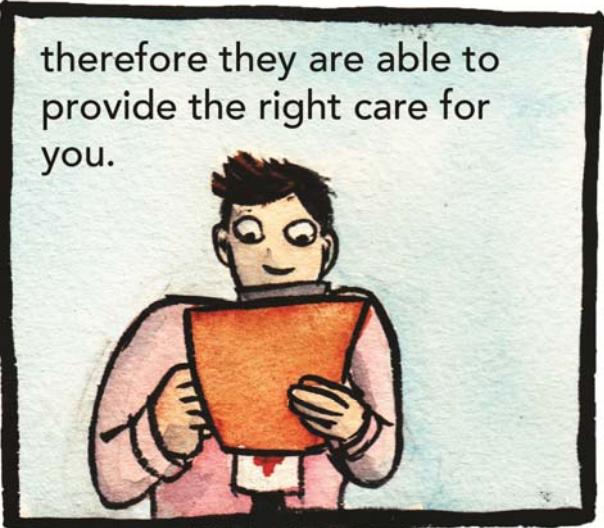


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If you could have given yourself one piece of advice back then, what would it have been?



I think many people lie in the GUM clinic about how many sexual partners they've had in the past 4 months!





What are your positive experiences regarding your HIV diagnosis?

I think that HIV has given me more than it has taken away from me. It's been a journey and I am sure this will continue.

There is no reason why I shouldn't live to a normal life expectancy.

I think HIV has also given me a better network of people to work and socialise with.

And what are the negatives?

I do find it hard to take my medication, which is a negative.

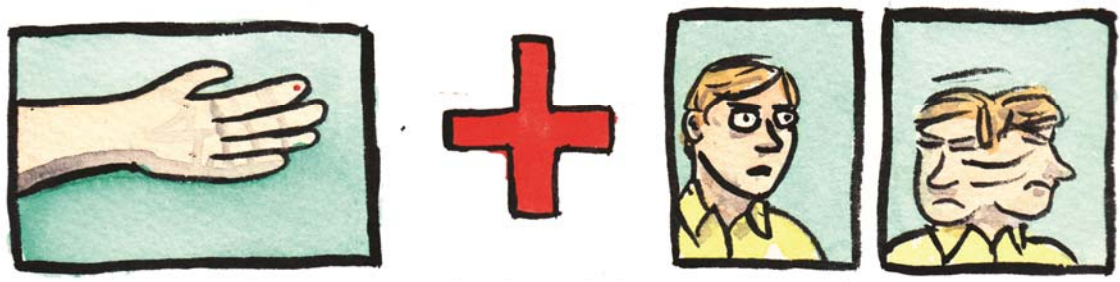


The idea that HIV medication is easy to take I feel is misrepresented.

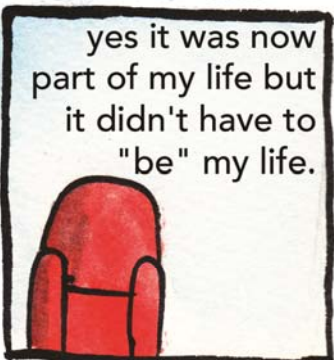
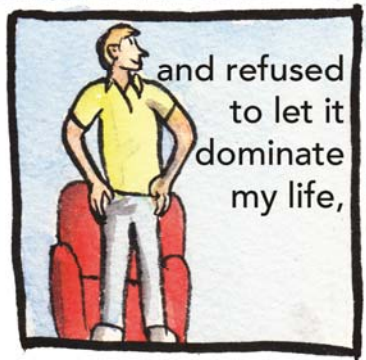
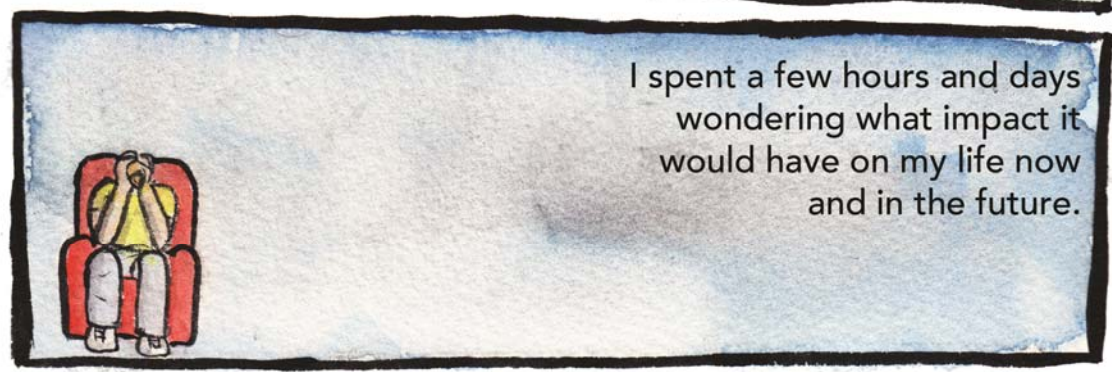
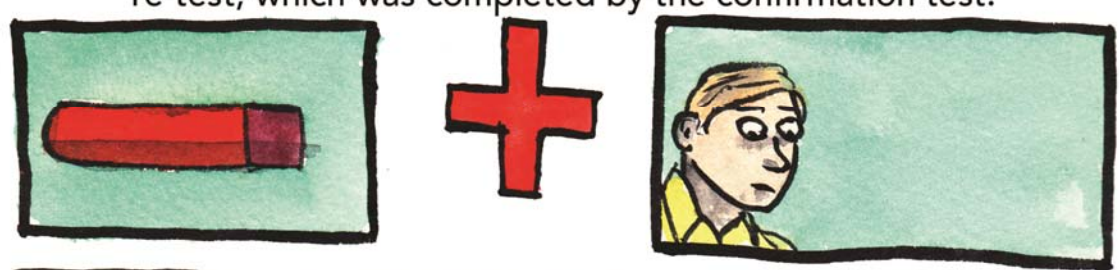
With any medication you take there are long-term side effects which can affect your day to day living.



What was your initial reaction when diagnosed in 2012?



I was diagnosed in 2012 to shock and skepticism; at the time it seemed emphatically impossible that the test was right. Initially I demanded a re-test, which was completed by the confirmation test.



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