

“Now, every day is a gift.”

In this blog, Kathy shares her experiences of coping with her husband's cancer diagnosis

Looking back to 2014 when my husband was first diagnosed, I really did not think we would be where we are today. Thanks to amazing medical staff and funding for research, I can honestly say life is probably even better now than it was when the dreaded words 'lung cancer' came crashing into our lives.

Dealing with a diagnosis

When my husband was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer, we were initially offered very little hope of successful treatment. As well as trying to support him both emotionally and practically, I was dealing with my own world falling apart. I didn't want to break down in front of him, but spent a lot of time swimming (people think the tears are just chlorine) and many lonely times in the wee hours of the mornings.

Being a 'carer'

Alongside the complete bombshell of my husband's diagnosis was the shock of now being referred to as his 'carer'! At the time, I was working long hours running my own business and he was away a lot with his job. Suddenly, we not only had to get our heads around this devastating news, we were also thrown together 24/7 with a massive cloud over us that wasn't going away. I didn't really feel I could share what I was going through with anyone. My husband was everyone's focus - which I understood - but I also felt very isolated and forgotten. It was a really tough period.

Learning to live with ALK

The only thing I could do was take each day as it came. I think it really helped not to look ahead too much and to enjoy each precious moment. Thankfully, he was accepted onto a clinical trial for one of the very early ALK+ targeted therapies. And the rest is history... a history we thought we'd never get to write. Over time, we gradually learned to hope that we would have longer together. Without the diagnosis, we would have sleepwalked through life. Now, every day is a gift.

Kathy's reflections

Over time, living with the diagnosis has brought us closer together. We can now laugh at me being his 'carer' because thanks to new treatments, he is doing really well. I feel we have been given a golden opportunity to enjoy life together rather than ploughing on doing what we were doing and not really planning our future together.