

Yvonne Osborn —I am a brittle diabetic and have coronary artery disease and congestive heart failure. My father had heart disease in his 30's and passed at 60 from sudden cardiac death. I was first diagnosed in 2002 with severe coronary artery disease and since then it has been one thing after another.

In May 2002, I was having chest pain but ignoring it because I didn't think anything could be wrong; I was only 34 years old. Finally, it got so bad that I called the ambulance from my house. I had a catheterization which showed a 90 and 95 percent blockage. In July, I got a heart catheterization and they decided to do brachytherapy the next day. They did and in the middle of the night (that night) I had my first heart attack. I was getting catheterization after catheterization and stent after stent until September of 2002, when I had my first bypass surgery. I had the surgery and was doing fine for a while when the chest pain returned.

Over the next 4 years, I kept getting more catheters and more stents to open my vessels. Finally, in 2007, the doctor suggested getting transmyocardial laser revascularization surgery. So I had that surgery and had a terrible side effect, Dressler's syndrome. It felt like I was having a heart attack everyday!! I finally got better, but the surgery was unsuccessful. After a couple of months, along came the chest pain again. I started back with the catheterizations and more stents. Finally, my doctor said he didn't know what else to do for me. I started doing research and thought that the Cleveland Clinic, a few hours away, might be able to help me.

I went to see a new cardiologist and she was surprised how many heart catheters I had had (28 at the time). She said the vessel they kept repairing was not a major one and that she wanted it to just close completely and die-out; the blood flow would re-route itself. She was also surprised that I didn't have a pace maker/defibrillator because I had been diagnosed with arterial fibrillation. In the fall of 2009, I then found out I had congestive heart failure.

I had been feeling great—but I woke up on the morning of January 29, 2011 with horrible chest pain. I was rushed to the local emergency room by ambulance and found out I had another heart attack. I was sent to Cleveland and they did another catheterization (#30) and another 95 percent blockage. I had another heart cath in September 2011 (#31) and had an 85% blockage. My cardiologist couldn't put a stent in because my vessels were so small and there were already two stents in there. She said I had to get another open-heart surgery when it starts to close back up. I started getting chest pains again in December of 2011.

On January 17, 2012, my cardiologist did my 32nd heart cath and I had a 95% blockage. I was in the hospital until my surgery, which was scheduled on the 25th of January. I had the nine hour open-heart surgery. My spirits are so high, and I'm positive, which helps greatly.

I was thrilled when a production company in NYC called and wanted to do a story on a patient who has had so many procedures and still had a positive outlook. They chose me!! It is a documentary about how America is reluctant to pay for preventive treatment, but will pay ten times that amount for treatment. This production crew came to my home in Caledonia and filmed me all day. They filmed me at the Cleveland Clinic twice. It was a premier film festival at the Sundance Film Festival 2012 and all five showings were sold out. It received many positive reviews. The name of the film is ***Escape Fire*** and it is due to be released in 2012!

Despite all the hardship, pain and multiple procedures, my story is definitely a "heart success story"—I'm still here for my grandchildren!!