

# My Story

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My Story as told to my long time friend Dr. John, on his house call to Moriarty NM, and The St. Christopher Fund Folks.

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First let me tell you a bit of who I am or better yet who or what I'm not. I'm not a doctor or health care pro; in fact I'm probably just like you in many ways. The good doctor asked me to tell of my journey leading up to my situation of today in hopes that some of you can and will benefit from my experiences.

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Prior to my initial diagnosis of having type 2 Diabetes way back in the late 90's or early 2000, you would have been hard pressed to have found a more vibrant or engaging guy.....shoot I had it ALL. In guy speak, this meant having girl friends, a good job as an independent housing contractor, plenty of money, yep, I had it all, only to see it fade away in following years. My "Golden Days" were gone, the bad economy was winning. My health was getting worse, too. Oh, as usual, even in desperate times I thought I was invincible, nothing could slow me down. I was bullet-proof. Too head strong to listen to others. It didn't take long for all this self-centered crap to turn on me. Soon the lousy economy killed most of my contracting work and it became very hard to find work. With no other real skills my days loomed very dreary, just as things seemed their darkest then my friend James offered me a job driving a truck in his produce business.

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This was my entry in '03 into my new career as a van hauler but due to my poor health (Diabetes), I lasted just 6 short years. My decline started with my legs and feet, they became so weak and numb that standing and or driving caused unbearable pain! Dr. John and other medical folks warned me that continued standing or any undue pressure on my legs could lead to loss of one or both legs. This possible danger to my overall health led to my retirement as a van hauler in '09.

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I was alone by this time. It was now all up to me, a guy who wouldn't or couldn't recognize his own poor health issues, left to figure this out, still not following Dr's orders, I knew more than they did....yeh right! Always independent of others' advice, always living and doing as I please, my avoided and ill-managed health concerns are now starting to ravage my body.

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Since I and many of you are plagued by poor health such as Diabetes, let's start there. Diabetes is a terrible disease. It doesn't hurt so you may not even be aware that you have it. Diabetes can destroy your body organs causing heart failure, liver damage, eye site problems and amputation(s). You could end up like me, an amputee rolling around in a wheelchair, having to depend on others for many things. Amputation is a life changer!

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If you care for yourself on a regular basis that may not prevent the on-set of some bad disease but proper self-help may be your ticket to a cure or at least an ability to manage your sickness. Don't let a hard-headed attitude rob you of living healthy. Don't think you know more than the pros; you DON'T! Assume the worst and expect the best. If you don't take care of YOU no one else will, it's up to you!

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You don't have to end up like me, don't be a hard ass, if you need help you can find it, even if you have little or no insurance The St. Christopher Fund can help you as they did me. You don't have to go it alone. Reach out, help is available, no matter your problem.

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Now consider this, because I was so sure that I knew my body better than anyone, I really thought I was bullet-proof, ignoring all the warning signs of impending poor health, and now I'm paying the price. After being diagnosed as Diabetic, I was burdened with a heart attack, a double by-pass on my left leg to increase blood flow, followed by many months of recovery, two strokes leading up to my current condition. I am a 66 year old male, no insurance but Medicare, living now in a 600 sq/ft apartment as an amputee of my right leg! Since I

lost my leg, I have only had 2 visitors, besides my sister, and that was my friend James who hired me as a truck driver and Dr. John.

- It's not too late, it ain't over 'til they're kicking' dirt in your face, don't ignore your health, bad stuff can sneak up on you in a hurry, get help you can't go it alone, no shame in asking for help. Maybe you think you are ok now and maybe you are but remember ill health can and does at one time or another strike fast and hard, so why take the risk, don't press your luck, man or woman up and from now on promise you that you will take care of YOU!

- Thank you Dr. John for the house call and the help from St. Christopher for letting me speak to your trucker friends.

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- Jimmy McClendon (Jimmy Mac)

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- If you are diabetic and need advice you can email me. I do have a direct line to Dr. John. I was his first 7<sup>th</sup> grade Quarterback and he owes me a few favors.

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