

Alzheimer's Association Listenline

Mary Hogan - Transcript

Mary Hogan: He did things that were out of character, like he would leave me sitting alone in a restaurant waiting for him for half an hour, and then I, when he finally showed up, he didn't seem to understand why I was upset.

Glynn Washington: This is author Mary Hogan talking about her husband, actor Bob Hogan. Even though Mary was upset, she followed her gut and tried to figure out what was going on.

Mary: I said to Bob over and over, something's wrong. You need to get tested, and he would say to me, something's wrong with you. You need to get tested. Which was so unlike him. He was never snotty like that. We were in couples counseling. I was trying to figure out what was going on.

Glynn: Mary continued to support Bob and seek help. Despite his resistance. She was patient and persistent. Then one day something happened that they both had to acknowledge.

Mary: We were on vacation in a foreign country and it was the last day of our trip. We were on our way to the airport. My menopausal bladder acted up the way it always does when a bathroom is really inconvenient.

So Bob pulled over to the first cafe he saw and I just hopped out of the car and ran in. I went to the bathroom, I ran back out. And he was gone. I stood on that corner waiting for him to come back for three and a half hours until finally the police came, and we figured out how to find him. Bob's judgements on that day, his decision making was so off that I really knew that something was very wrong. And so he finally, finally got tested and that's when we found out.

Glynn: Bob was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Mary noticed small signs, but it still took time to get the diagnosis. Pretty often signs of Alzheimer's are difficult to recognize and reconcile. Their symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time.

It's important to get this nailed down as early as possible. Get a diagnosis as early as possible, even if you have to just nag and do whatever you have to do. It's critical to get that earliest diagnosis

Glynn: With the diagnosis, Mary and Bob we're able to decide together on how they wanted to take action. Mary and Bob made a move to the country, that made their lifestyle easier and more accessible for Bob.

Mary: He's six years after diagnosis, which is pretty far in. This morning, believe it or not, he woke up looking for his tennis racket that he had a game. You know, I don't know what has caused Bob to suddenly become an athlete, but I-

I just go with it. I take his hand, I try to relax him. I tell him, you know, want to go back in bed and I'll try to find the tennis racket. And then he goes back to sleep. And a couple of hours later, he'll wake up completely fine. He'll say to me, boy, that was crazy. It was so real.

Glynn: Even though Alzheimer's is changing their lives, Mary and Bob still have a constant, their humor.

Mary: well, believe it or not, my husband is still very, very funny and I don't even know where it comes from. I mean, I'll give you a perfect example this morning after his little tennis incident, and then he kind of came back to himself and I said, boy, I is this the new you, you're going to be a professional athlete every morning and what's the next sport?

And without missing a beat, he said, jai alai, Which I don't even know where he got that, but that's just, he's a funny guy. He hasn't lost his quirky sense of humor, believe it or not. We laugh a lot. It's kind of the way we've always related as a couple and it's the way we still relate as a couple. It sounds very Pollyanna, but I am determined that we are going to live with this disease. We are not going to die with it, and so we do everything that we can to have a full life in spite of it. And so far so good. You know, we'll, we'll see what happens tomorrow morning.

Glynn: That was bestselling author Mary Hogan on getting the diagnosis of Alzheimer's for her husband, Bob Hogan. When you notice a difference, trust yourself. Talk to a loved one and see a doctor to hear more stories we now we turn to the Alzheimer's Association Listenline menu.