

Excerpts from:

Surviving a *Successful* Heart Attack

By Mike Stone

<http://www.heartrecovery.net>

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Preface

I am neither a doctor nor a nurse. Once upon a time I did earn a Boy Scout merit badge in first aid but that was about 40 years ago. What then gives me the authority to write a 'Health' type book?

Three years ago, at the age of 51, I found myself on the way to the Emergency Ward while undergoing a heart attack. In retrospect, I can say that I was most fortunate in seeking immediate medical help at the time of the attack, however I later discovered that there was a considerable amount of information not covered in the Rehab Program regarding the *real recovery* from a heart attack. Understandably, no two people emerge from this type of experience at the same level of health, and no two people react exactly in the same manner to medication that becomes a daily necessity. Not everything written in this book will apply to everyone who has had a heart attack. There definitely is life after a heart attack; however it is different not only from the obvious physical standpoint, but also from the mental and/or emotional standpoint as well.

This is not a typical *how to* book. I will leave the writing of the "Heart Attack Guide for Dummies" to someone else, assuming it has not already been written. This is the story of an average non-smoker, non-overweight, ordinary guy who surprised everyone with his heart attack; that is everyone except my wife Esty who constantly warned me that a heart attack was on its way, and the unpleasant surprises along the way to mental/emotional recovery and self-acceptance.

Who is this book for? First and foremost it is for the heart attack victim. Should he/she react in a similar fashion to my experience to the medications, the results should not come as a total surprise. Secondly, to his/her spouse and immediate family –

an understanding and comprehension of *what's going on* may prevent a potentially tense situation from exploding into a relationship strained unnecessarily. And to the general public that is concerned about a potential heart attack in the future, you may decide to give up the cigarettes, get rid of some of the excess baggage and begin an exercise regimen compatible with your age and general health, preferably after consulting with a physician.

I have deviated a bit from my initial thoughts regarding *for whom this book is for* because of the events in the three year post heart attack period I personally encountered and what I have learned. It is now my hope that the medical establishment that deals with cardiology will become more attuned to the potential upheaval in the *quality of life* that post heart attack patients may experience and certainly no less important, to re-examine the real reason that caused the heart attack in the first place.

What originally started out as a layman's book of answers for other heart patients has evolved into more of a book of questions.....

Chapter 16: One year later...

July 2005

It has been a full year since releasing the original version of "Surviving a Successful Heart Attack". I am grateful for all the feedback I received. Some correspondence was from other heart attack patients thanking me for making my story known. Others raised questions regarding data they felt needed further explanation. Hopefully this revision gave them a better understanding of what I had gone through.

Now for the good news! I feel as though I am living a full life again and not just *surviving*. Two years have gone by since I discontinued my statin medication. The results of my stress test taken 6 months ago show that I reached a maximum level of 14.9 METS which is 59% above the calculated maximum rate for me.

I realized that the subject matter I covered was going to be controversial and I was well aware that as a lay person without the benefit of an accredited medical background, the content of my book could possibly raise some eyebrows in the medical profession. Shortly after an initial distribution of "Surviving", I was pleasantly surprised to receive an invitation to address the staff of the Cardiology Department at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

It wasn't too long ago that I was sitting in a large lecture hall with approximately 100 other post heart attack victims at a follow up rehabilitation session. We were the silent majority in the hall. On the podium were senior staff professionals that included the head of the Cardiology Department, the head of the Rehab Program and other senior staff members. Occasionally they would be joined by a guest lecturer. Talk about a change of places! That day it was me addressing the dedicated cardiology staff, the doctors, nurses, surgeons and the upper echelon of Hadassah Cardiology. I related my horrendous experiences the statins

caused me and the extensive research I conducted which led to my decision to discontinue my prescribed statin medication.

I was also aware that my decision to abruptly discontinue the statin medication would not sit well with some of the cardiologists. After all, a computer geek lecturing cardiologists who have been prescribing statins for years could possibly have an abrasive effect and be somewhat counterproductive. There is a word in Hebrew that describes this type of behavior that I exhibited that day. It's called *butzpa* and it has now seeped into a number of foreign languages. For those of you that never heard the term before, *butzpa* is somewhere between *impudence* and *insolence*.

It was my hope that I might reach those few who still have open minds regarding the statin issue. Looking at some of the facial expressions in the audience, I realized I had reached a number of these professionals. In the discussion following my presentation, the department head asked his doctors if they had other patients that reacted adversely to statin medication. Almost sheepishly, several doctors stated they had patients that encountered negative side effects. It appears that negative side effects caused by statins are not issues doctors feel comfortable discussing.

Nevertheless, medicine today does offer a prescription alternative to statins that lower cholesterol levels in the bloodstream for those that experience negative side effects. The prescription is marketed under the name Ezetrol. Active ingredient is ezetimibe. According to the literature, it does not cause statin type side effects.

Statins reduce the amount of cholesterol in the blood stream by ultimately preventing its production in the liver. Ezetrol does not reduce the amount of cholesterol produced. It does however prevent the cholesterol from being absorbed from the small intestine into the bloodstream. During my presentation I stated my reason for refusing to try this latest medication. Simply put, I no longer believe that it was the cholesterol that caused my heart attack. I have totally accepted and adapted opposition views

as represented by notables such Dr. Uffe Ravnskov – high cholesterol was *not* the culprit that *caused* my heart attack.

The following summary appeared on my blog:
http://people.lulu.com/blogs/view.php?blog_id=1628

Mike Stone, author of *Surviving a Successful Heart Attack* was a guest speaker of the 'Journal Club' of Hadassah Hospital – Cardiology Department, Ein Kerem, Jerusalem.

On February 7, 2005, Mike Stone author of "Surviving a Successful Heart Attack" was the guest speaker of the Journal Club of Hadassah Hospital – Cardiology Department, Ein Kerem, Jerusalem. Mr. Stone discussed the 2 main themes of his book:

- The massive disruptions in his professional and personal life resulting from the statin medications he was given following his heart attack.
- His reason for discontinuing the statin medication, based upon published research works of Dr. Beatrice Golomb, Dr. Kilmer McCully, Dr. Uffe Ravnskov, Dr. Mary Enig, Ms. Sally Fallon president of the Weston A. Price Foundation and other reputable researchers.

Mr. Stone ended his presentation with a personal plea to cardiologists to be more receptive to those patients complaining about negative side effects after taking the prescribed statin medication. In addition he urged doctors and researchers to keep an open mind above and beyond standard reasons still being given as the major cause of heart disease – high LDL cholesterol levels. A short discussion regarding statin side effects followed.

Surviving a Successful Heart Attack is available directly from the publisher at: <http://www.lulu.com/content/73226>

Posted on Monday 07 February 2005 (10:26:07 UTC)

Life goes on! I am still making a concerted effort to prevent another heart attack from happening. No one knows for certain whether or not this may occur.

I continue to bike ride. My weekly target that I usually meet and/or exceed is currently 150 km (94 miles). I am constantly striving to improve my eating habits and that of the Stone household. There is a sense of personal satisfaction when I see Esty or the kids looking over the ingredients listed on various food items. We now religiously weed out partially dehydrogenated ingredients and have abandoned the low fat agenda. Lately I have been experimenting in the kitchen concocting various dishes which up until now, was considered an alien life style. It was not all that long ago that I had no idea whatsoever how the process occurs that magically transforms raw materials that are bought at the supermarket into a hot delicious meal in our dining room! It is amazing how one learns to innovate when a change of life style is thrust upon him. My breakfast routine now includes a glass of homemade naturally fermented kefir. I make cheese Lebane by separating the whey from the fresh goat milk and then use the whey to make naturally fermented sauerkraut. I also use the whey in homemade whole wheat bread that I now bake. Believe me, these are things the pre heart attack Mike never attempted!

Finally, do I have the feeling that I outsmarted the doctors? My answer to that question is a resounding **NO!** I am reminded of this every time I have my semi-annual checkup at the hospital. On the one hand, I mentally have in my camp Dr. Ravnskov and his associates; I have Sally Fallon; I have their research, their papers, their articles – theirs and many other sources and references mentioned throughout this book. On the other side of the scale I have my Professor of Cardiology sitting across his desk discussing my situation. His sincerity regarding my well being is overwhelming. Yet I can see the frustration in his eyes for his failure in not convincing me to get back on statins or at least to try the Ezetrol medication. He has been credited in saving hundreds of lives with case histories similar to my situation. I am not about

to question his credentials or his devotion to each and every one of his past and present patients.

My professor certainly is not pleased with my cholesterol levels. Dr. Gaziano (chapter 11), with his emphasis on the Triglycerides to HDL ratio, would be. Interpretations of Dr. Gaziano's work indicate that the ratio of these two factors should be lower than 2. The lower the ratio, the healthier the patient. In May 2001, about the time of my mini heart attack in Paris, my Trig/HDL ratio was 3. Two weeks after my heart attack in July 2001, which included 2 weeks of continuous medication, my Trig/HDL ratio was down to 2.16, still above the red line of 2.0. In May of 2005 the ratio had dropped to 0.88! That's right, my HDL level was now higher than my Trigs level.



Someone once asked me if I could turn back the clock, would I prefer NOT to have that heart attack. Needless to say, nobody wants to experience a life threatening heart attack. Ironically, because of my heart attack, I am now in the best physical shape of my life. I now have terrific endurance that I credit to my bike riding. In addition, I have totally changed my eating habits and I have learned to put a lid on stress. Yes, I also opened the door to the world around me.

Tough question indeed.....