

Well, they told me I've got "Parkies". I was 50 at the time. It was Adelle's birthday.

I didn't know how to respond, how to react. The only thing I knew about Parkinson's was Michael J Fox.

I fell into instant depression and fearful of what was to come. That was something I did not want to put my family through. That was 8 years ago.

But with the help of my GP and Parkinson's Victoria I learnt that Parkinson's is manageable. **We don't know a cause, we don't have a cure, but YES we can manage it!**

As soon as I was introduced to Parkinson's Victoria, I was immediately plugged into a fantastic team who helped me to understand and manage my "Parkies". They helped me with referrals to allied health specialists, plugged me into their education and peer support seminars, and provided me and my family with the information we need to understand Parkinson's.

I can tell you that if Parkinson's Victoria wasn't here, I wouldn't be able to work, I wouldn't be able to drive, I wouldn't be able to go out and socialize. I'd be sitting in a mess somewhere shaking all day and not being able to control it.

Parkinson's Victoria has helped me understand my medications and how they work. They have given me the confidence to continue working, to continue playing golf and doing all the things I love to do with my family and friends.

I just follow their directions and if something isn't feeling right, if the meds aren't working properly, there's no hesitation - I call and someone will talk with me.

My family and Parkinson's Victoria are my team. They give me a push along every now and then, they'll wrap their arms around me. I've learnt that you've got to allow them to help you with your condition.

It's why I want to share my story with you and with every person who has this condition. I believe that by sharing our own stories we learn from each other and we support each other.

Lastly, I don't know how you are doing during this pandemic. I won't hide from you that I'm struggling a bit. I'm no longer working, unable to go and play golf, but I am fortunate that I have the love of my family and the support of Parkinson's Victoria.

As much as possible, I haven't let Parkinson's stop me from living my life. **I am determined that this condition will not manage me – I'll manage it!** I have a motto that comes straight out of James Bond 007 – I'm shaken but I'm not stirred.

And for as long as I can, I may shake but I'll continue to fight this condition and support others to do the same.

Thank you for reading my letter. I wish you well my friend.

