

Figure It Out For Yourself

Paul E. McMahon



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Living With Heart Disease and Other Small Challenges, Second Edition

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*To the medical staff at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital in New
York City*

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A few months after my 18th birthday my father died from his third heart attack at 58 years old. Before he died he impressed upon me the importance of always having a goal in life and never ever giving up. When my sister died from complications of Lupus erythematosus at 53 years old her words resonated in my brain: "Don't trust the damn doctors. Figure it out for yourself." From her I learned to figure out what's going on inside my body and to manage my own challenges. I am 65 years old and living with aortic heart valve disease. I am also a marathon runner who doesn't plan to ever stop running even though I know my disease is progressively getting worse. I will eventually need to undergo open heart surgery to replace my aortic heart valve. This is the story of two weeks in my life that occurred in December, 2014.