

## Transcript of Interview with Anthony Reed by Kit Heintzman

**Interviewee:** Anthony Reed

**Interviewer:** Kit Heintzman

**Date:** 07/30/2022

**Location (Interviewee):** Augusta County, Virginia

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Transcribed By:** Angelica S Ramos

### **Some of the things we discussed include:**

Maintaining a positive mindset. Having had a stroke at 18, going on dialysis, and entering the medical field as a healthcare professional and public speaker. Having a familiarity with how one's body responds to illness. Comparisons between experiences of safety precautions during the pandemic and safety precautions as a former transplant recipient: masking and isolating; people's reactions to mask wearing pre-pandemic. Early stages of pandemic denial. Having speaking engagements canceled in 2020. Beginning a blogging during the pandemic, Kidney Trails; that blog evolving into a publishing company. Leaving the house as an essential worker and seeing the roads empty; safety precautions upon returning home; considerations of family safety. Seeing coworkers struggle with the pandemic; PPE shortages. Changing safety precautions at work. Getting sick with a workplace COVID outbreak in late 2020; family getting sick. Having access to other healthcare professionals and lab workers who interpreted evolving scientific knowledge. Wife giving birth to their third child during the pandemic. Raising kids with little memory of pre-pandemic life. Finding good things to hold onto. Vaccination. Deepening appreciation for friends, family, and time. Celebrating Christmas Eve dinner with parents. Learning gratitude from experience: having been adopted and immigrating to the USA as a young boy. The mental impact of COVID. Embracing life's lessons.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:03

Hello, would you please state your name, the date, the time and your location?

**Anthony Reed** 00:08

Anthony Edmond Reed the day is July the 30th. Time 11:05 and I am here in the Augusta County of Virginia.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:21

And the year is 2022.

**Anthony Reed** 00:23

Yes, 2022.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:25

And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under Creative Commons License attribution noncommercial sharealike?

**Anthony Reed** 00:34

Yes, I do I consent.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:37

Thank you so much for being here with me today. Would you please start by introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening? What would you want them to know about you?

**Anthony Reed** 00:45

Well, just a really quick background about me is, I was actually adopted in 1990, by two wonderful parents do from Guatemala and brought over to the US had a good childhood. But at age 18, I ended up having a stroke due to high blood pressure. And because I didn't do what I should have done for a sticking with medication, I ended up on dialysis as a patient in 2013. With in stage renal disease, I did dialysis for four years got transplanted in April 13 2017, have had the opportunity to work in the medical field in a in a technical capacity, which has been wonderful. And even in you know, things were going well with it. And then 2020, of course, COVID hit and definitely changed the way the medical field was at the time, and also some of the different experiences that we found during COVID. And even at one time catching COVID myself. So that's just a little rundown.

**Kit Heintzman** 01:50

Tell me a story about your life during the pandemic.

**Anthony Reed** 01:54

Life during the pandemic. When it first happened, it was interesting, because of the fact that I had, I've been in public speaking since 2014. And I had about 9 to 10 speaking engagements scheduled for that year. So what I ended up doing is, when 2020 hit, we were all excited and then COVID hit and all their speaking engagements got canceled. So one of the things is I want to get the story out there. So I started my own blogging site, called kidney trails at time started as a personal blogging site. And, you know, it's kind of grown to where it is today. But the interesting thing about it is while a lot of people were getting used to this fact of, you know, be in, be in shut down not being to do this masking up all these other different things, it was interesting, because I was kind of already used to that. Being that I was transplanted, there was times I wouldn't ask at times, I wouldn't go to different things because of certain scenarios, or there could have been somebody there sick and I did not want to get sick. So I was kind of already used to that wasn't really a lifestyle change for me in that regards.

**Kit Heintzman** 03:02

What was it like watching people for whom that was a new experience, go through it for the first time?

**Anthony Reed** 03:08

I found it fascinating, because I think a lot of people. First of all, a lot of people don't like change. And whether it's good or bad, it's hard to accept that this wasn't a change that a lot of people would consider good, especially with all the many negative things that were going around with the shutdowns and all that. So I can tell it's very difficult on them mentally. A lot of times you can see the strain on their faces, the things have not been able to go where they wanted to go. And once again, for me it was interesting and fascinating. And also, I was also I would say very intrigued because I was able to share my experiences as a former dialysis patient, on how I got through dialysis, it was pretty much the same thing. It wasn't nothing different. The same mental capacity, same mindset that I had on dialysis was something that helped me through COVID. And that was having the good things stored in my mind. You know, yeah, I couldn't go out. But I had a family. Yeah, maybe I couldn't go where I wanted to

maybe vacation got canceled. But hey, at least I was still living, you know, and I was able to do the things that needed to be done and to be able to even as a transplant patient, even to provide care in the medical industry.

**Kit Heintzman** 04:25

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19?

**Anthony Reed** 04:29

I remember first hearing about it in December. That year is just just little murmurings that there was a possibility of a disease and they weren't sure how quick it was going to spread. And so you know, we weren't really keeping a close eye on it. You know, it's one of those things you kind of think was just gonna blow over quick. And then when it finally hit over in the States, it really we started to see it and you know, there was a lot of different meetings that we were in trying to figure out what was going on in the thing is a lot of unknown things for all of. Those in the medical field, those in the advocacy field, those that were had their own business and all that it was all brand new. So trying to figure out how did the disease work? What What was the, the pathological part of it? What was the pathology of it? What did pathology know, that was one thing I did turn to was the labs. Because if anybody would know anything about the disease, it would be the laboratories and even then, being as brand new it was, the laboratories were even they were learning as they went as well. So yeah, it was definitely a lot of changes. But also things too, I found it interesting as well to see it, I never thought I would see something like this in my lifetime.

**Kit Heintzman** 05:40

Pre pandemic, what was your day to day looking like?

**Anthony Reed** 05:45

Pre pandemic day to day, like I said, I was, I've been in the public speaking industry for since 2014. So, you know, I'd have a few speaking engagements, like, throughout the year, you know, you'd go out sometimes I'd wear a mask on public, if, you know, there wasn't anything going around, if it was I'd wear a mask in public, and which was interesting, because when you, when you would wear masks, back then pre pandemic, you'd go down an aisle in the store, and everybody clear out, you know, they thought you were contagious. Of course, after pre pandemic, that wasn't the case, after the pandemic, that wasn't the case. So day to day living, just normal, you know, get up, go to work, do my job, come home, you know, do all the precautions, you know, as you would in any anybody in the medical field. But then, you know, once COVID happened, it was a lot, it was a lot different, the, the precautions that we took were a lot more strict, even going home, one of the things is I didn't want to take it to my family, you know, that's something that concerns me greatly a great deal. So, you know, pre to pandemic, everything was good, you know, pretty normal routine. And then after pre, after the pandemic, hit it case, a lot of different things.

**Kit Heintzman** 06:54

You've touched on this a bit already. But I'm still wondering if there's anything else that you would be willing to and are comfortable sharing about your experiences with health and healthcare infrastructure, again, in the pre pandemic world.

**Anthony Reed** 07:07

In the pre pandemic world, you know, in the health care industry, and, you know, one of the things is we didn't have to wear masks, you know, that was just pre pandemic, you know, you'd go around, and it was nice to not have anybody with a mask on because, you know, you could, you know, you could throw a smile, if somebody's going through a rough day, you know, you could tell they were going through a rough day, a quick smile, and keep on working, you know, just a little smile of encouragement, seeing people's faces, seeing their faces light up, that was, that was interesting, during pre pandemic, you know, also pre pandemic, you know, you would go home and you went and you know, you would not pretty much take everything off and put it in a box and then run to the shower, you would get home you know, take some take some precautions, but not as strict. After pandemic, things change and go as soon as before you can walk in the door, clothes would go right into a bucket, you would go straight to the wash the washroom, you get you a shower right away, ask the family not even to come in touch you and hug you. And it's kind of hard as a father, when your kids would want to come home and they'd want to hug you say no, not until I get a shower. You got to wait. So that was definitely, definitely different versus you know, pre pandemic versus pandemic. Those hugs mean a lot to a father and to a mother. And then to be able, you know, if you came in contact, pre COVID You know, you didn't really have to worry about anything, you know, if you look at the fluids and other different things, but after pandemic, if you came in contact with people, then you'd have to isolate yourself from the family. And that was that was challenging as well.

**Kit Heintzman** 08:38

Has your relationship to touch changed much over the last couple of years?

**Anthony Reed** 08:43

The relationship detach far as to do my work, I wear gloves most of the time now. You know, definitely you know, with other you know, family members and things like that it did change a little bit. You know, now somebody's got a sniffle I'll be six to seven feet away from them versus back then it wasn't as big of a deal with me, you know, to see that so, you know, it did change over a little bit. It's you know, now that we're in the place that we're in, it's kind of going back to somewhat of a a little different way you're still cautious you know, make sure nobody sick a little bit you know, just take the precautions if you're really concerned I wear gloves. I'm really concerned about something definitely clean and more often clean and workspace is clean in my own vehicle, you know, wiping down the steering wheel, things like that. After you know times I get in and out.

**Kit Heintzman** 09:40

Would you tell me a bit about your family and their reactions to what's been happening?

**Anthony Reed** 09:46

At first when we first started here in murmurings ever one of the things is, there was a lot of misinformation so a lot of us didn't know exactly who to believe. And with my family, you know There was different avenues they would use to try to find information now, but not a lot of people knew, thankfully, I had labs that I could go to some of the Laboratory of professionals that I do know and was asking them to bring home information that would be beneficial, be beneficial to all of us. And I think with any of us family or non family, there was a lot of people that were in denial at first, that this was even a real thing. And there was a lot of different theories out there that were probably weren't a very good help at the time. And, you know, after a while, even me, I was in a little state of down out. And this was really a thing. I mean, I think a lot of people at certain points were until the series is starting to really hit hard. And you know, when you're sitting there, and you're in the middle of the work, and even in the advocacy field, things are starting to get canceled because of this, you realize, hey, this thing is the

real thing. And we got to be really, really careful. So, you know, family at first was a little hesitant, but over over time, it took a little time to realize that hey, this thing is real. And that we've got to be extremely cautious and careful with it.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:04

Was there a tipping point that sort of shifted you out of that denial, or was it sort of slower?

**Anthony Reed** 11:11

Well, it for me being transplants, you know, anything, any kind of new new thing that I hear about, I'm always a little bit more concerned a little bit more careful. So for me, it was really I started seeing different things quite quickly, a lot quicker than most people were seeing them. And I think when the whole nation shut down to two weeks, I was driving to work and I saw empty roads and that's when things really shifted. Something's really up. And I think that's about where I really started shifting was when everything shut down. I'm driving to work and realize it's eight nine o'clock in the morning and most of the time vehicles on the road there's nobody there but me I was that was definitely a different feeling.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:55

What did that first lockdown look like where you are?

**Anthony Reed** 11:58

Where I was at, the first morning I'll never forget it. We did everything [inaudible] I think I locked down on Monday. And we were all preparing for the lockdown. You know people going here buying food and stuff. And I literally when I got in the car that morning is about eight something heading to work. And I look around on the main highway whereas there's multiple cars and the only car on that road was me. It really realization started settling in. Okay, yes. So, you know, going through the different going to my place of employment and seeing just the my co workers cars and you know, we were we're at it was definitely it was definitely rough. It was definitely rough when I walked it, you know, it was walking down to another clinic and in the end one of the hospitals and there's nobody around. Yeah, that was definitely different. Definitely different.

**Kit Heintzman** 13:02

Did you have to have any kind of special permission to leave the home?

**Anthony Reed** 13:07

Being that I was a medical care worker, that permission was already given because we were known as essential workers. So that was the permission that I had. Just made sure to have all my ID and all my what my title was what I did.

**Kit Heintzman** 13:26

I'm curious, what does fatherhood meant to you?

**Anthony Reed** 13:30

Fatherhood?

**Kit Heintzman** 13:33

Yes, sir.

**Anthony Reed** 13:35

Okay. fatherhood, definitely, it for me, I'll put it this way. One of the things is, and we can go on this a little detail later on, in his interview, but being that I was out that that I'm out there working, my wife would stay home with the kids. I felt a very great responsibility to protect my family at all costs. And there's some times when you're faced with something like this, you do everything you can. But it's extremely difficult when you come home and realize you've done all you can but it wasn't good enough. You know, to try to protect your family from this to try to protect your wife, you know, my companion from this my children, it was definitely it definitely means a lot. I take it very serious. And with this, when it finally came to my home, it really hit home and said I did everything I could and I still couldn't protect them. And that was very difficult for me to take in.

**Kit Heintzman** 14:37

That sounds like a very heavy burden to bear.

**Anthony Reed** 14:43

It is I look at more instead of a burden a responsibility. And it's something that I think that you know, me as a parent in general and then as a father just it's that responsibility that I am entrusted with three little ones. And the interesting thing during this pandemic is my youngest daughter was actually born in the hospital during the pandemic, right during the, the heat of it all. So, you know, there's a thing, you know, I'm trying to keep her safe, you know, she's a newly born and trying to keep my son safe because he had some physical issues as well. And, you know, just trying to keep my family safe, and of course, trying to keep me safe. But there's a point even for me that I was going to put my family before me, which I'm glad I did.

**Kit Heintzman** 15:36

How much do you think your young ones understood about what's been happening?

**Anthony Reed** 15:41

At the time, they were too young to understand. For that my son at the time, he was about three. And my other daughter, she was two and my newborn, you know, she was just born. So they are a little too young to understand. They didn't know what life was before the pandemic, really. So it's all been kind of normal to them.

**Kit Heintzman** 16:06

Would you share anything about what it was like to have a daughter born during the pandemic?

**Anthony Reed** 16:15

That was, yeah, that'd be happy to share that because I find it very interesting to have, you know, my daughter born during the pandemic, when we went to the hospital, my daughter, being born into the pandemic, being in hospital during the pandemic was definitely different. You know, you have to mask up in the room, that was definitely hard for all of us. And then to say that I'm bringing my daughter into this world that's facing with a pandemic, when my when my wife delivered my daughter, and we got to the room, and I was able to hold her for the first time. The first words out of my mouth to her was the same words that I told all my children. And that is they were born to win they were born for success, and that they work anything that was put in their way. That's

the first words that I want to make sure that they heard from me for the first time. And as it became especially meaningful when we all knew we were facing this pandemic.

**Kit Heintzman** 17:22

You've mentioned eventually coming down with COVID. What was that like? When did that happen?

**Anthony Reed** 17:29

We were at work in the place of employment that I was at got hit extremely hard with COVID. And to the point, I had to go get tested and came back negative, I was very happy. But I was the last one to get it. And it was around Thanksgiving time. And I called the doc and I didn't know what it was, I had a feeling it was COVID. But there were some other things that I had that was going on beforehand. And when he sent me for the test, to go get a test. As I was driving down the road, it was a lot of emotion. I didn't know what it would be like I didn't know you know, we'd heard all these things we had heard the death rate we had heard the life expectancy, what could happen here, what could happen there, this was towards the end of year 2020. So we knew a little bit more about it. And one of the things is being a transplanted recipient, I knew that anytime I get sick, it's not that I catch it quicker than everybody else, it's that it can be harder on me than it can be on anybody else. And not, not knowing that was the very, it's the unknown, I think, a lot of the fear of the unknown that a lot of people were and even me I was a little nervous of the unknown. It got to the point, I hadn't got my test back when I got home, it took us a couple of days, there's a little bit longer than it is now. But when I got the test back, I finally had to call them on the weekend and say, I am so sick. If this isn't COVID I need to be in the hospital. And I got called back and they said you've got COVID but you'll be okay. And I remember laying on the couch and seeing my children. And they started to come down with it my wife was coming down with it. And I and I realized that as a father as a protector. I did everything I could do but it wasn't good enough. There was nothing that I could do to hold them back from all this. It was a very emotional, but also a very serious time but also the time for me to learn and [inaudible] learn what life had for me during that time. I did everything I could do and while it wasn't good enough to keep them from getting COVID I did the best that I could do and that's all I could have done.

**Kit Heintzman** 20:03

After you found out that you had COVID, how did you, what did it look like being in your home?

**Anthony Reed** 20:12

Well, the first thing is I knew one thing, any disease, as far as I've had, I've had kidney disease disease, I've actually had a stroke back at age 18, I think I previously mentioned is that I knew a lot of the battles would come at night when the fever would be generally higher at night. And it would be the time I would be up. And a lot of times the mental battle would start, you know, might as well give in don't don't even try it anymore. It ain't worth it. And being in the home and being isolated from everybody else, yes, we had the the our handheld devices, the different ways of talking to people face, you know, virtually. But it really hit home, but also knowing that, you know, there was other people that was going through the same thing. I was grateful I was home, I was grateful my family was with me. I was grateful we had each other, that was a major, major benefit for me. And I mean, I didn't even walk out the house. And the thing is, back then it was two weeks, that you had to self isolate late. Well, my transplant team said I had to be four weeks. So being in the house stuck four weeks drove me nuts. I was dropped by my wife and kids nuts by the end of it. But I think the thing is that it's is that it's like, it was like a very long winter. There's sometimes in seasons, we have very long winters, it could be very short, very mild. But some winters can be very harsh. But you know, spring is coming. And that's the thing that kept coming to mind springs

coming. This, this is gonna pass we're gonna make it through. Yeah, that night, the other night before I almost didn't make it through. But I'm here this morning, and I'm gonna get up. And I came out with a saying it was this COVID knocking down, but I was still able to look up. When I saw where I was at, I got up and kick COVID butt.

**Kit Heintzman** 22:10

As an essential worker and working in an environment with other essential workers, how did the workplace change in that sort of early period?

**Anthony Reed** 22:18

The mental aspect of it all I could tell. And part of it goes back once again, is I had prior experience because I was on dialysis. There's a lot, it's a lot of the same battle in dialysis mentally as it was in COVID. And I could see and I was grateful for my dialysis experience as a patient. Because of the fact I was able to share what I learned with those that were faced in, technically this type for the first time. And so it was a mental aspect change. I remember going in almost every day trying to encourage it. It's going to be okay, we're going to make through. Come on guys, you know, hey, look, you know, here's one of the things I learned. I didn't know when I was going to get a transplant. I just knew I was going to get one and then I was one day closer to getting a transplant. So we need to look at it we're one day closer to beating this thing. So it was the mental aspect thing. Yeah, while we have you know, as far as the PPE and all the other different aspects of that change in, you know, a lot more cautious N95s gowns as soon as you walk in the door, you know, all these different things. The mental aspect probably was the biggest change.

**Kit Heintzman** 23:25

What was your access to PPE?

**Anthony Reed** 23:31

At first, anything we could get hardware store wherever we could find it, because there was such a shortage, you know, everybody was facing this. If you had an N95, it was like gold. You know, go off find the rest of whatever you could. I mean, it was, you know, at first it was scrounging, but it wasn't long before we were able to get a control of that. And we had the PPE we needed to do it. We had the mask, we had the gowns, we had everything we needed. And it didn't mean we were careful with it. We were cautious with it. We didn't overdo it. We use it as much as we could until we exhausted it.

**Kit Heintzman** 24:15

There's been so much going on over the last couple of years that wasn't just COVID I'm wondering what else has been on your mind over the last few years?

**Anthony Reed** 24:26

Well, for me is, the thing is I look at it this way. There's a lot of negative going on in the world today. And I think throughout time there's always been negative I also understand to negative is easier to take in than the positive it over. It's like it's like a garden. Okay, if you look at your mind as a garden, you have it's easier to grow weeds in the days to grow vegetables because it takes work to grow vegetables and with all the negativity around it for me, I don't get up in the morning and grab a cup of coffee and grabbed a newspaper. I get up in the morning, start my day off with something good. It doesn't mean I don't pay attention to make sure everything's okay. Once in a



while, but I don't dwell on it. I can't dwell on it myself. If I do I slip into depression so great that I wouldn't be able to get out of it and wouldn't be here. So it's just the in these are habits that I learned when I was on dialysis. Habit, I started to learn when I had the stroke. It's just a continuation. Yeah, there's things happen. It's always bad things happening. But let's look at what is the good thing to happen. One of the good things happened and we had the vaccine. And I can tell you, even in the advocacy field, that was a big step, people that had transplants, that was a big sigh of relief. When I first got the vaccine, that was a big sigh of relief, I felt good. It was, it was a wonderful feeling. But once again, let's concentrate on the positive things that are happening around us. Let's concentrate on these, these these good things because there are good things out there. They just take a little bit more work and that's where the negative but that's kind of how [inaudible]

**Kit Heintzman 26:12**

I'd love to hear a story of something positive that you experienced, big, small anything.

**Anthony Reed 26:20**

I think one of the. Well, for me, there was a lot of different things but one of the things that my family grew, of course, as I was stating, with my daughter being born in during COVID, which was wonderful, makes my life definitely a good thing, and which it never was a bad thing. It just makes it more a lot sweeter. But one of the things I think is during COVID is when I ended up starting kidney trails as a personal blog. And during COVID I not only started to just a personal blog, but it became a blog that a lot of people write on, share their story, sharing the lessons they learned through their journey of life, whatever it may be. Went through that. I started my own company started the business during COVID. People say it's the worst time to start one. For me, it was the best time I've got a publishing company and a broadcasting network all these different good things that are happening. We're getting books and stories out there this year. I can look at it in this way in a positive light, we've got several books that will be published bringing in the good thing, and even a book on COVID on how somebody overcame I think that's a good thing. The other thing is COVID taught me a lot of about myself. A lot of the good things a lot about my strength and resilience through a a hard time. It taught me also to be a teacher to share what I had learned previously so it was good thing you know, the other thing is too I appreciated my family when I finally was able to get out and get out of the house which was Christmas Eve after COVID, having COVID, I remember the first time I walked in my parents house and to see them for weeks. It may be appreciate them more it made me appreciate my co workers more and made me appreciate those out there that I knew just through you know just through a phone call or through a zoom call. I appreciated people more I appreciate time more. Time was not a guarantee for any of us. But it made me appreciate it more that's a good thing. It's a lot of different things of that nature. We look at things on that way. It can change your mindset and continue to our own world.

**Kit Heintzman 28:40**

Would you paint me a picture about what it was like that first time you saw your parents?

**Anthony Reed 28:51**

One of the things is Christmas Eve we decide to have a Christmas eve dinner. And it was kind of celebration because not only had I gotten not only had my my family gotten but my parents have gotten COVID too. And it was walking in that door and smelling the smells of the food cooking. And looking at my mom and I wasn't much of a hugger at the time. But seeing my mother I became a hugger real quick. And it felt good. I hugged my father and to say we made it through that. The picture I would paint is me standing in the kitchen with my arms wrapped around my mother as dinner was cooking on the stove and to know that we're there was family and that we made

it through and that we were able to enjoy that time we had together and that is the Christmas Eve I won't forget as long as I have memory.

**Kit Heintzman** 29:49

When you decided to get vaccinated, how easy was access?

**Anthony Reed** 29:55

Well, for me it was a little easier than then I'd say the majority of people. One thing is I was transplanted. So I was immunocompromised. So that was a little easier for me to get that. But also being in the medical care field also bumped me on the list quite quickly, because I was in and out of it every single day. So, for me, it was easier access than the majority of which I'm grateful for that I was able to get it.

**Kit Heintzman** 30:28

I'm curious, what does the word health mean to you?

**Anthony Reed** 30:34

Straight, positive. Resilience. kind, compassionate. Health means a lot of different things. It means time, it can mean time, not all the time. But it can mean time to have my health back, after a stroke, after the kidney failure after the transplant after COVID. It's precious.

**Kit Heintzman** 31:06

What are some of the things you want for your own health and health of people around you?

**Anthony Reed** 31:12

My thing is to be healthy enough to be around my kids, which I am to go out and play with them to go out and do this and do that. Enjoy life. Really, that's pretty much it. For me, for other people I hope and trust, they will find the help that they need to be able to enjoy life as well. Even mental health, mental health is a big thing now, which it always was it was underlying for a long time, but COVID brought it to light. And I think that's another positive thing that COVID did was bring that mental health is a thing to be mentally healthy, to have the good things in your mind. So you can enjoy life. So you don't have to worry about thinking about the negative things face and depression and all that having a good mental health, getting out of that being able to go do what you want to do. And I would love to see people do that.

**Kit Heintzman** 32:01

What does the word safety mean to you?

**Anthony Reed** 32:03

Oh safety. With me, with being safety. I'm kind of one. I don't, I don't say I'm not safe. I'm kind of one more to take risks in life. Because I understand the risks can have more benefits. It's also a little risky. But life is risky in itself. I don't think life is really safe. You know, we can do everything we can do. But something had happened to us throughout the day. And so for me, it's you know, if I wanted safety and security, they could somebody could put me in a room take care of me feed me in probably live up to 100, some years old. Well, what's the fun and all of that life has risks, it becomes risky when you are born, that really safety, we take all the precautions that we can but know that if you really want to enjoy life, sometimes you have to take the risk.

**Kit Heintzman** 33:03

Would you give me an example of one of those risks?

**Anthony Reed** 33:07

For me, the risk goes back to the business. When I started the business, I was not financially secure. And there was a lot against me starting the business because you know, you're going to, you're going to pay from you and your family for going after your dream going after the vision that you felt that life was calling you to do. But I didn't want to be in that room so to speak, cuddled in the corner. And so I took the risk and started the business. And I'm grateful I did it. One of the other risks that I took, and it goes back to transplant is when I was offered the kidney, I took the risk of accepting the kidney and going into surgery, surgery wasn't safe, or it wasn't it's not that it wasn't safe, there was certain risks that could happen. But the reward far outweighs the risk. So those are two prime examples of taking risks and good things happen. And that doesn't mean I haven't taken risk in my life and bad things have happened. I think one of those things was I took the risk of not taking my medication and will later be in dialysis and not a good risk to take sometimes you gotta you gotta weigh it out a little bit.

**Kit Heintzman** 34:28

What are, again, I know you've touched on some of these already in the small confines of safety from COVID. What are some of the things that you've been doing to keep yourself feeling safer?

**Anthony Reed** 34:40

Yeah, of course the one thing is I did get the vaccine, both of the vaccine as well the first shot in the second shot and then got another shot third shot. For me just being careful. You know if somebody's sick, I don't want to be around them. I don't want to be around them anyhow I don't want to end up in the hospital. If I'm in a environment where people are sick, I'll mask up, I'm not going to, you know, there's nobody thinking I'm not gonna worry about it. But if I if somebody is sick, I'm masked up, hey, it doesn't hurt to carry some hand sanitizer and just going a little bit more often. It doesn't hurt to just, you know, hey, you know, I'm not feeling well, I don't want to go out right now and take a chance of giving somebody else something that I got even though maybe a sniffle, you know. So just, you know, keeping, it'll be a little bit more cautious about things, it doesn't mean you can't enjoy life that let's just, you know, be a little bit more cautious and aware, I guess, would be a better term term than cautious to be aware of what's around you.

**Kit Heintzman** 35:36

How did you negotiate your needs around safety with others?

**Anthony Reed** 35:41

Well, most people knew I was transplanted. My co. My co workers knew I was transplanted. So anytime there could have been potential, they would let me know and say don't come here until this is cleared out. So it wasn't really negotiated. People kind of knew what what I had faced. And they helped me take precautions. And that gave was a great deal of, I guess, you know, comfort, you know, a great deal of comfort in that.

**Kit Heintzman** 36:15

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

**Anthony Reed 36:18**

I am excited about the immediate future. I'm excited about the good things are coming up. You know, it's interesting with this, this COVID, this pandemic is our generations challenge. And here's the interesting thought that I that I found out, there's something that I think is very interesting. Our generation was built for that time, whether they know it or not, they were built for this time. The reason they were built for the time is if we weren't built for the time, we wouldn't be here we'd have been in another generation, past generations that face other things, they face wars, they face pandemic, they faced this and that, and then we're strong enough to come out of it and grow. Here's the interesting part about it. After the storm, and after the rain, flowers come in the rainbow, they shine. I'm very excited about the future. Good things have come out of this. I've gotten to connect with people all over the world. Because of COVID I've been able to speak all over the world because of COVID Even though it's been virtually, I have been able to have meaningful conversations that I would have never had pre this. I've been able to go with my family and spend more time with them. Because of this. I'm very optimistic about a future a good future, and that our generation will be strong enough to overcome anything else that may come before us. Because if not, we wouldn't be here.

**Kit Heintzman 37:47**

What are some of your hopes for a longer term future?

**Anthony Reed 37:52**

All right, for myself or for everybody?

**Kit Heintzman 37:55**

Both.

**Anthony Reed 37:59**

The first thing far as my hopes for it is? Well, the thing is we're seeing it, we're seeing the good thing coming out, we're seeing more technology helping out, you know, especially with the pandemic, you know, things were done quite speedily. That's a good hope to hold on to that, hey, our future can be longer because maybe the vaccine data future can be longer because we know a little bit more about that we were quicker on this time. And I just think we're gonna get better and better all of us will, some of us will, because some people will get better at technology, some people will get better at thought process, whatever it is, I think we can grow from this. And my hope in the future for all of us is that we grow crops from this, that we run wheat bloom.

**Kit Heintzman 38:47**

Gratitude has been such a strong theme in your answers. I'm wondering if you would tell me a bit about how you how you learned about gratitude how you grew into gratitude?

**Anthony Reed 38:58**

Well, one of the things is, first of all, I guess I would go back to my childhood. When I was adopted, my my parents brought me back here and after, you know, having the opportunity to come from a country that didn't have a lot and being brought to the land of plenty, so to speak, and learn more especially recently learned more about my home country in knowing that where we're at, it's a great opportunity. Even though my parents brought me back here, they didn't have everything in life that they needed and wanted and sometimes that they needed. I remember one time we had one box of food in the pantry. That's all we had to last for the week. But somebody

stepped up and provided when you don't have everything, and you don't have everything you need and you don't get everything that you want. You are grateful for the small things. When you're on dialysis and you've had some bad days and you get the good days you're grateful for the good days you enjoy it, the more it also goes back that at age 16, I started to be taught in a different way from my uncle, to talk about how to be mentally strong, taught how to be mentally, a little bit, you know, a little bit more in self-development, self-help, and learn more things about life more than just, he did so much for me. He helped he put on the tapes, and those CDs of self-development, self-help to help me along this journey. And without him I wouldn't be here, I look at life now is I'm grateful for every day, I've faced death, I think seven, I think it's seven, eight times, and very close in multiple occasions. So when you say that you're grateful for life, and you're grateful for the small thing that's helped as well, for me to be grateful and to be a lot more, just just enjoy them more.

**Kit Heintzman** 41:06

Who were the people in your life who've been most supportive of you during the pandemic?

**Anthony Reed** 41:12

Well, I can tell you, my uncle and I have talked significantly, a lot. And he really, really helped me through, we both helped each other because, you know, he was facing some physical complications as well. And it's interesting, because I was able to help him as well. My parents, of course, my good wife, my, you know, seeing my kids, just seeing you're walking in home, and they say, Daddy, that support the support that only a child can give. And then a few of my coworkers, some of them that really mean a lot to me, and I don't want to name them, but they have, I'm thinking of three of them right now, that really, really helped me through this. And, you know, we helped each other it was more than just, you know, they helped me it was a, it was a we were holding on to each other encouraging each other along the way. You know, it was also my team with the kidney trail team. Kidney Trail started during this pandemic. So I had a, a wonderful, wonderful, supportive team behind me. So they helped, you know, other people, other friends and relatives and neighbors, it it was a really is really interesting to see and how we all support each other.

**Kit Heintzman** 42:31

Could you share an example or two of a moment where you gave support or received it?

**Anthony Reed** 42:38

Well, I could go back to, there was so many different times this, what happened is that I would see the faces on my coworkers even though they were masked up, I could tell it in their eyes, they were tired, they were discouraged. And then I'd go back and I started sharing, I'd start trying to uplift and trying to give in person and then share maybe a little experience on when I was on dialysis. You know, this one time was especially difficult, but I came through it. And this is how I did it. Go listen to this CD go listen to this self-help development course. It's only 20 minutes there, listen to this, hear the motivational quote, maybe this will help you today. And then sometimes I'd walk in my office, and there'd be little notes of encouragement on my desk as well, encouraging me, I'd come home and my wife would call me and say, Hey, you doing okay. You okay? I know you're tired. But are you doing okay? Those things mean a lot. And those are just little, little times. My uncle would call me we check on each other wonderful thing.

**Kit Heintzman** 43:48

I'd love to hear about what you noticed around sort of bigger conversations happening around the needs of immunocompromised people during the pandemic?

**Anthony Reed** 44:00

Well, one of the things is, of course, the first thing what happened, being immunocompromised, and then you know, being being, you know, being aware of those associations out there that are working hard to help, you know, give information out. There was meetings, what do we do here? Do we go out here, you know, let's stop this meeting. Let's go virtually let's do this. You know, what do we do? One of the conversation is when's the vaccine coming? You know, I think a lot of people that are immunocompromised, we're really looking forward to that. And, you know, up to date information, what can we find out? You know, for me, like I said, I had a little different intake of that because I was able to go to other places other than I was going to go other different places in the medical field. And as because I had a direct link, but it was, you know, what do we do? What can we recommend that with possibly, you know, people you know, people not to get this. As far the immunocompromised community, and a lot of times the immunocompromised ended up staying home, which I don't blame them, you know, your health first. For me it was I need to help other people. So that's what I was doing. So you it was it was these conversations each and every time. Then a lot of it revolved around the vaccine. And then what would life look like after COVID? Who would life look like after we got the vaccine? I don't think it looked like what people were hoping it would look like. But it looked a lot better than when it started.

**Kit Heintzman** 45:41

What are some of the things that you've done to take care of yourself?

**Anthony Reed** 45:46

Well, first of all, a cup of coffee always helps. [inaudible] for me. And I don't know about everybody else. But really one of the things is taking care of myself mentally. Listen to those tapes or not tapes anymore. I mean, that's going way back to showing a little bit of what year I was born in, but going through the different social media sites and listen to that encouraging message and encouraging thoughts from other people, you know, the Jim Rohn and the, you know, I don't know if you can play it, but the Jim Rohn and Les Browns and Zig Ziglar it's just listening to that stuff really helped take care of myself mentally. And then looking at you know, let's look at a physically well, I mean, we should eat a little bit better, you know, of course, I didn't go out to eat much before, but it definitely didn't go out to eat as much afterwards, cooking a little bit more at home. You know, trying to get out and walk with the family at the park, whatever it may be stuff like that.

**Kit Heintzman** 46:45

Do you feel like COVID-19 has been a historic event?

**Anthony Reed** 46:50

Oh, yeah. And I think a lot of times, I trust and hope that when people read about this or look at COVID, they may see some of the negative side effects that it had. But I hope what they see is the resilience and the strength of our generation to overcome this. I hope they see the resilience and the strength of people that the healthcare workers that walk-in day in day out knowing sometimes they were looking straight in the eye. I hope they see the resilience and the strength of the other essential workers that were trying to you know, far as in the in the grocery stores and trying to provide food. I hope they remember in the hope that is recorded the the the times that people

did may have got it that they overcame the COVID. I hope they see the good that came out of this and not just the bad.

**Kit Heintzman** 47:49

How do you think people can build resilience and how as a culture, we can work towards a population with more resilience?

**Anthony Reed** 47:57

Well, one of the things is, you know, start sharing the stories of those tough times. Start going out and sharing them. And don't just share the story, share the lessons that you learned with it. You want to learn how to be resilient, how to have strain, how to have a good mental, good mental I don't want to say capacity, but a good mental mindset, how to have a good mindset, how to learn, you know, listen in, find the stories out there, find the lessons, build your own philosophies on one strength and resilience that means a lot of different everybody. Some people show strength and resilience out there, you know, just in a physical way. And sometimes it's the mental way, a lot of times it's the mental way. So I would say that if we really want to build this up, we really need to share the good things and share the lessons of life that we learned from these negative situations. The thing about a negative situation is there's really an opportunity that life gives us to learn from it to be able to share for the enhancement and strength of others.

**Kit Heintzman** 49:05

What do you think scholars in the humanities and social sciences so disciplines like literature and film and poli sci? What should we be doing to help us understand the human and social side of this moment?

**Anthony Reed** 49:19

I think the one thing is interviews and not just interviews about really get interviews and like I said I'm gonna go back to the stories I think everybody no matter what capacity you hold, the story can be it can be shown how the story can be written about as a publishing company myself running one you know and as a writer myself, that's things that we are doing write but I mean, I've written about my COVID experience, I don't want it to be lost to history. I don't want the lessons to be lost to history. You know write about it in your journals take it around you know you can people can blog about this stuff now. There's there can be films made about the strength and the resilience there could be documentaries Yeah, we can look at the negative, but let's look at the positive side of things. But let's go into that. Let's show how strengthen reason. Yeah, we can look at all the negative numbers. There's plenty of them to go around. But let's look at the positive numbers. Let's look at the positive things in that area. And let's showcase that.

**Kit Heintzman** 50:21

I'd like you to imagine speaking to a historian, one far enough in the future, who has no lived experience at this moment. What would you tell them can't be forgotten as they go forth doing their research about the history of COVID-19, what would you want them to like hold on to as something really important?

**Anthony Reed** 50:46

I would say to that historian first and foremost, is look at the look at the effect that it had mentally on people. Because I think it affected more mentally than it in a greater capacity than physically, physically, it was a great capacity. But mentally, and to know that, we really need to focus on that throughout. Because 99% of the battle of

any of this is in the mind. 1% is everything else we see 99% of within the mind. Don't concentrate on that 1%  
Concentrate on that 99.

**Kit Heintzman** 51:34

Want to thank you so so much for the generosity of your time and the beauty of your answers. These are all of the questions I know how to answer them, or know how to ask at the moment. But if there's anything else you'd like to share about your experiences over the last couple of years, I'd love to hear them.

**Anthony Reed** 51:54

I just, I guess if I would leave with any thought it would be this, I don't know where people are in life. And you know, wherever, wherever this may find somebody in wherever in history, this may actually find somebody, I don't know where they're at. But I know one thing, they're one step closer to the next peak its up there. And once you get to that peak, is a view far beyond our own comprehension and thought it's a view that only you can take. And you can see the beauty of life and the beauty of what really what life is about. There's been a lot of experiences that I've had in life. But the one thing that I know of is that every time that I'm faced with a challenge or faced with a, a an obstacle, when I have overcome that it's a gorgeous view. And it's beautiful. And you can look back and you can see the the places where you almost fell you can see the places that you almost gave up. But you also see the beauty of the journey, and that's what I would say.

**Kit Heintzman** 53:13

Thank you so much.

**Anthony Reed** 53:15

Not a problem.