

Erin Craft 0:01
All right, this is Erin Craft,

Sam Beeson 0:02
and I am here with Sam Beeson. Hi, Sam. Thank you. Today's date, march 7 2022.

Erin Craft 0:10
Okay, and do we have your permission to add this to the journal to play your archive?

Sam Beeson 0:13
Yes, you do. Perfect. Thank

Erin Craft 0:14
you so much. Alright, so I'm going to start with an kind of an interesting one. When did you first realize that COVID-19 was a serious threat?

Sam Beeson 0:23
I would say it was early March of 2020. I work at a hospital, I work at St. Joseph Hospital. I'm not a medical person, but I work with people who are. And the talk around the hospital was that this was coming. And there's not much we can do about it. It happened to have been my wife's and my anniversary. And we had gone to dinner downtown. And the atmosphere in the restaurant was just, it was just off. And that was around March 10 2020.

Erin Craft 0:57
So people had started to get a little nervous and yes, okay. Once the, it was declared, uh, you know, emergency things, did your daily life change? Were you part of a lockdown?

Sam Beeson 1:09
Yes. Okay. My, I became the hunter gatherer of the family. Because I could not work from home, my wife could work from home, but I could not. So I went out and did all the grocery shopping. And I saw the shelves that were emptying and it was scary. And then, of course, I knew about what was going on at the hospital. I had had stories heard stories of how many people by this time it was coming up on the summer, that how many people were dying? And how many people were put into our hospitals more, which only holds about four or five people and there was double that many in the morning? And it was it was scary. And I I knew it was scary.

Erin Craft 1:56
Your role in the hospital? Did you ever feel compromised? or endanger? Or were you separate enough from the patients?

Sam Beeson 2:02

I was separate from the patients per se. I mean, I still have to walk in the same corridors that they get wheeled around in. But I was close to some of the doctors and nurses who are dealing one on one with the patients. So in that regard, I was nervous, but but I was taking all the necessary precautions.

Erin Craft 2:24

But kind of precautions Did they tell you to at first Oh, washing your hands all the

Sam Beeson 2:27

time, wearing a mask all the time. And trying to keep distance we tried to keep in our office, we tried to keep social distance from everybody. And for the most part, it worked in my department.

Erin Craft 2:43

For your family, like everyday life, did things change drastically. What was home to home life, like during that summer of 2020?

Sam Beeson 2:51

Yeah, it was, it was quite a bit different. Like I said, my family took it very serious to begin with. My wife, she worked for shamrock foods and they were allowing the Shamrock and she was credit analysts. And they were allowing her to work from home. And all of our extracurricular activities like we were on bowling leagues. All of that came though, stop. We weren't going out to eat anymore. You know. And it was the only time we went out was grocery shopping or because come January, when it was time for vaccinations to go around for health care workers. We all kind of made it a big deal. And they will they went with me to get my shot at that time.

Erin Craft 3:36

So you had stayed home pretty much in between them.

Sam Beeson 3:38

They have Yeah, I was I was working and I was going out and gathering the groceries.

Erin Craft 3:44

Any positives from this time? And some people say no, some people have you know, like, got a pet or something.

Sam Beeson 3:51

No, it was horrible. Okay. What happened?

Erin Craft 3:55

All right. Did you learn about yourself anything different about yourself that you didn't know before? Or about people that you are surround yourself with?

Sam Beeson 4:07

I was kind of disappointed in how people were not taking it seriously. Even though like on social media I put out there, guys, this is serious. This is serious. We need to take this seriously. People are dying. And a lot of people just thought let's just the flu or it's just a bad cold. It's it's not gonna affect us. And to some extent, I thought if it were to hit us. Yeah, we'd probably be fine. I didn't realize what was going to happen.

Erin Craft 4:39

Yeah. without getting any details about anyone else's health information. Did it affect people close to you?

Sam Beeson 4:45

Yes. Okay. I actually got COVID I got my vaccine, but within a day or so I got COVID I think I was already sick when I got it. And I didn't feel sick. I felt fine even after the vaccine but about 3, 4, 5 days later. So I started coming down with mild symptoms of a cold. And that's all it manifested itself for me. My son, he got a little bit sicker than I was. And, but he was mostly doing okay. Until one night when he wasn't doing okay. And then my wife steadily got sicker and sicker and sicker until we had to call an ambulance for her. And that was on the same night that he, he's a type one diabetic. And he had a diabetic emergency the same night that I called an ambulance for my wife. And the doctor has endocrinologist, I called him up on the phone. And he said, let's keep them out of the hospital if we can, and walk me through a treatment plan for him. Meanwhile, my wife went to the hospital.

Erin Craft 5:50

What happened with your wife,

Sam Beeson 5:51

she was in on a regular floor, they admitted her, she was on a regular floor floor for about two days. And she called me and told me, she, they were going to have to move her up to an ICU. And at the time, we were still thinking, Okay, we need to need to get some breathing treatments, because her oxygen saturation levels were very, very low. She has had a positive attitude, she's very brave. And after about three days, in the ICU, she called me up and said that they were going to have to put her on event. And I talked to the doctor on the phone. And he said at the time, you know, we want to do this now before it becomes an emergency for her that she's just not getting better. And we've got to give her lungs a break. And she survived for 10 days on the ventilator. Until one morning I called down there to see how you how she was doing. I called every day because I couldn't visit. And sorry, and they told me that it's time to come down and say goodbye. And so my wife, my wife, my son and I both hurried down to the hospital, they let us get up and put on masks and everything. By this time, I had had my second injection. So I felt and I had been sick

with COVID. So I felt pretty well protected. My, my son, he had gotten over his severe reaction to COVID until he hadn't been injected yet, but he was he was doing good. And she was on a ventilator, of course, she was unconscious. And the nurses told us just take as long as you need to. And we sat in air and talk to her for about an hour or so. And then it was time for us to go. And they removed the vent when I said it was okay. And she passed away within two or three minutes.

Erin Craft 7:56

I'm so sorry to hear that. Thank you. So that horrible experience since then, what have what have you been dealing with your grief?

Unknown Speaker 8:08

Well, I, I had to channel it somehow. Because I was I didn't want to get overly angry. And I felt myself getting angry just with the attitudes with conspiracy theories with all the nonsense from people, but I thought What should have known better. So I discovered the marked by COVID. Organization and I decided that that would be a good way for me to channel my grief and my anger and try to be more productive in memory of my wife. And also I joined a widow support group, and that helped tremendously. So those two things really helped me to get a little bit of beyond what I was feeling at the time, the anger, the anger, the the depression, the sadness, and so on. Etc. Okay, so anyway, yeah, the grief support group and COVID marked by COVID helped me to channel because I couldn't get away from the word. I mean, most people who lose somebody to cancer to a heart attack or something, people will ask, Well, did they have any other or they don't ask if they have any other conditions, but with COVID that seemed to be okay to ask. And it was very saddening, you know that it's not what she had doesn't matter what she had. The fact is that she died from COVID and was the only reason listed on her death certificate. So I had to take that anger and channel it somewhere. And so I feel like this mark by COVID and doing these kinds of things has helped sharing your stories. Yes, super important.

Erin Craft 9:52

All right, last question and 100 years, what do you want historians or even the general public to know about COVID or

Sam Beeson 10:02

I would like them to know that politics made things rough. And it didn't have to be this bad. We were fake. We, our leaders failed us in many regards. We did not listen to the scientists and the doctors and the people who did this knew these kinds of things for a living. Instead, a lot of people listened to conspiracy theories. And that damaged, damaged us. And it led to mine, my wife's and going on a million other Americans death, not to mention the rest of the world humming with people we lost. So on the one hand, I'm mad about that. On the other hand, I have had great support from my friends and family. And from my work, and I have seen the good that people have

done events like this events, organizations like Martha COVID and people who want to hear my story and I'm always willing to tell it because I owe it to my wife.

Erin Craft 11:03

Thank you so much for sharing that with us. Really appreciate it.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>