

## ***Letter from a Heart Attack Survivor***

**From: Bob McCleskey**  
**Sent: Friday, March 25, 2011 3:40 PM**  
**To: Sellen Total Company Distribution List**  
**Subject: heart attack!**

**Dear Friends,**

**I've rarely forwarded a chain letter, much less started one, but I'm writing this in the hopes that my friends and family, and their friends and families, and so on..., can learn something from a recent experience of mine. Some of you know a few of the details but I'll give a quick summary and then share a few thoughts that I hope will help you and others avoid what happened to me.**

**The short version is that I had a heart attack a few weeks ago. The overwhelming reaction from everyone is that I am the last person they would ever have imagined this happening to. A very good friend of mine told me that the fact that it happened to me means that it can happen to anyone, and that I need to share my story. So, I'm on mission...**

**A few facts about me:**

**I'm 52 years old; 6'-4" and 192 pounds; I get annual physicals religiously; I have low blood pressure and low cholesterol and no health issues; I've played sports and/or exercised at least 3 times per week my whole life; I eat mostly natural foods and drink only moderately; and I have no family history of heart disease. The picture of health, right? Wrong! I have coronary heart disease, but I didn't know it.**

**What happened?:**

**Three weeks ago I was playing in a basketball tournament at the Washington Athletic Club and I came out near the end of the first half. Less than a minute later I felt dizzy and passed out. My heart stopped. My eyes opened, but I wasn't there. People near me did all the right things - checked for a pulse (none), called 911, found an automated external defibrillator (AED) machine nearby, applied the pads to my chest, and administered a shock that got my heart beating again, but only for a few seconds. CPR was then started, about 30 chest compressions... then I took a deep breath. I'm told that I was without a heart beat for less than three minutes (after 3 to 5 minutes brain damage becomes an issue). It turns out that I had a 30% to 40% plaque buildup in a coronary artery and it burst, completely closing off the artery and stopping my heart (this is the definition of a heart attack and it's the number 1 killer of men and women in the U.S.). The defib and the chest compressions opened my artery enough to get my heart going again, long enough to get to the hospital where they inserted a stent to fully open the artery.**

**What you can (MUST!) do:**

**1) Whatever your age is start or keep doing all the obvious things like watching your diet, exercising, not smoking, getting enough sleep, and regular checkups... Here's a link for more info on this topic from the Mayo Clinic:**

**<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-disease-prevention/WO00041>**

2) Get CPR training. It might help you save a life, and not just in the event of a heart attack. The Red Cross offers classes everywhere. Go to:

<http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.d8aaecf214c576bf971e4cfe43181aa0/?vgnnextoid=aea70c45f663b110VgnVCM10000089f0870aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

3) Think about where an AED machine might be appropriate in your workplace, or even in your home, and work to make it happen. Here's a link for more info on AEDs:

<http://www.aedsuperstore.com/assets/images/pdf/aedbrochures/BuyersGuide.pdf>

4) Most importantly, and please listen to this: If you are in your 40s or older, if you don't already have a relationship with a cardiologist, and even if you have none of the other risk factors for heart disease, go get a test called a Coronary Calcium Scan, also known as an EBT test. I'm no expert but my very highly regarded cardiologist is adamant about getting people in to have this scan. It is designed to show the amount of calcified plaque in your coronary arteries. Not every doctor is a big believer in this test but my doctor says that, in my case, the scan would have picked up significant calcified plaque, even 5 years ago, and I would probably have been put on a few drugs that could have drastically reduced my risk for a heart attack. The scan takes only 20 minutes from start to finish, there is no prep involved the night before, no dyes injected, nothing invasive. Depending on the results your doctor will recommend next steps, if any, and will use it as a baseline for similar tests in the future. At the very least this will get your family doctor more educated about your heart, or it will get you connected with a cardiologist who can guide you. Here are two links - one to a National Institutes of Health web site for more info on Coronary Calcium Scans; the other for a Seattle clinic that provides these scans. Call TODAY to get your scan.

[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/cscan/cscan\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/cscan/cscan_what.html)

[www.swedish.org/Services/Heart---Vascular-Institute/Heart---Vascular-Services/Diagnostic-Services/Coronary-Calcium-Scan](http://www.swedish.org/Services/Heart---Vascular-Institute/Heart---Vascular-Services/Diagnostic-Services/Coronary-Calcium-Scan)

I'm a lucky guy - living proof that a heart attack can happen to anyone. I just happened to have mine in a place that thought ahead far enough to have defibrillator machines within easy reach and people trained in using them (thank you Dan and Nic!). My prognosis is excellent because I was revived so quickly and I'm in good physical condition. The almost tragic story here is that this was probably preventable with a simple and relatively inexpensive scan. The cost for the scan is about \$200 but it is not covered by most insurance plans. If you can't afford it there are creative funding sources out there. Contact me and I'll fill you in.

One thing that any one of you would learn through an experience like this is that a lot more people rely on you and care about you than you ever imagined. If you can't make time to do the "4 step plan" for yourself, then do it for the people who love you. You have many fans out there, including me, who want to have you around for a long time. And if you are over 40, I pledge to bug each and every one of you until you at least take my advice and get a scan or talk to your doctor about getting the scan.

Bob

Bob McCleskey, CEO

Sellen Corp