

Nichols: What did you do in your mid 40s? How did you start... Did you start swimming, again? Did you start running, what did you do?

Greige: I ran a marathon.

Nichols: You ran a marathon? So there's still hope?

Greige: There is always hope, you're right.

Nichols: Now, did you train did you go through a Fleet Feet or did you do some sort of training to get ready for that?

Greige: So I mentioned my older sisters in each of them have two girls, and so, I'm actually closer in age to my 4 nieces than I am to my sisters and it was in July of 2002, my niece stopped by my house and told me she was going to go run the Chicago marathon, and I thought Well, having the competitive spirit that I do if she's going to run that marathon I'm going to run it too. And it was kind of before marathons, were really the thing to do. Now, I think lots of people have the opportunity, and choose that goal. But back then, it was a little bit more under the radar. And so we, in October of 2002, we trained together and went to Chicago and finished the marathon.

Nichols: What an awesome thing to share with your niece.

Greige: Oh, it was amazing. It was probably my first introduction to kind of community and sport.

Nichols: Well, okay, so you ran a marathon, but then you went on and you did something even bigger. And I've got a lot of friends that have done Ironman competitions and I'm always just amazed at that. So you went on and you did a couple of Ironmans in Louisville, Kentucky. So what inspired you to do that Teri?

Greige: So after I did that first marathon I joined a gym, and I started taking sprinting classes. The sprinting instructor said, "oh you know, maybe you should try outdoor cycling". So I bought a bike got into cycling, had always been a swimmer. So that was an easy one to pick up. Way back in the day. I can remember seeing Julie Moss a commercial on TV or something like that, literally crawling across the finish line in an Ironman competition, and crazy as it sounds, I thought. Wow, that looks pretty amazing. So I knew, I knew a little bit about triathlon for a long

time, and had that kind of as an outside goal, and I happened to have qualified for the Boston Marathon, this was in 2006 and I was watching TV and the Ironman competition, while I was training for Boston in the middle of the winter and the Ironman competition came on TV, the world championship and as I watched that.

Actually, the story was about a young man, they picked four or five inspirational athletes from around the world and tell their story. Probably the most famous being, Dick and Rick Hoyt. The father that pushes the son. I watched that in 2006. It was about a young man who had ALS. And his dream was to do this Ironman the World Championship and he said no matter what he would finish that race, even if he had to roll across the finish line. And as he came down that finishing chute, and I'm watching this on television he literally got down and rolled across the finish line, and his parents came and knelt next to him, and I just started crying and I thought, "I want to do that, and that's what started my goal.

Nichols: Covey says, start with the end in mind, you probably had to visualize yourself didn't you? Like crossing that finish line. That's the goal, right? But I'm sure you enjoyed the journey as well, along the way and training for that.

Greige: I absolutely do. I mean even to this day, I don't really compete, I say I participate and I don't have any plans on doing another Ironman because I had the opportunity to cross the greatest, I think, finish line ever in the world and I've really achieved all of my physical goals that I have set out for me. Now it's the purpose behind the drive.

Nichols: And we'll get into that. I do want to get into that. So you did two Ironmans. And that was... 2008 and 2009 in Louisville. And then you had what I call a life interruption. Tell us about that.

Greige: 2008. I had come in fifth, in my age group in Ironman Louisville and the fourth place woman qualified for the World Championship. So I had this goal that I can train smarter, better or do all these things and possibly qualify for the World Championship in 2009. so I went back to Louisville, but as I was training in the spring and the summer of 2009, I just didn't have I had a foot injury that wouldn't heal, I was tired, I thought well maybe I'm over-trained, I'm a year older I started having some bleeding, I thought, Well, anybody that sits on a small seat on a road bike for 100 miles could have issues.

All these things. But I said after I finish the race, which was in August, if I don't start feeling better, still having issues, I'll go see a doctor and I was only 10 minutes slower than the year before. I didn't qualify. But true to what I said, our bodies are just amazing. I called, actually a good friend of mine's husband was a gastroenterologist. So two weeks later, I had a colonoscopy and when I woke up from the colonoscopy, as you say, my life was interrupted. I always say my life changed in the blink of an eye, a snap of a finger, and he came in and said you have colon cancer, it's a very large tumor, and I want you to go over and get CAT scans.

Nichols: Those are scary words, aren't they? I recently was at the Siteman 20th anniversary of Siteman Cancer Center and someone was speaking and she said it's just those words, you have cancer. You have cancer. And she said It's just almost surreal, but to some, the scariest words.

Greige: Well, your life is never the same as the nano second before you hear those words. But I always like to keep in mind, Lisa. Everybody has a cancer which is an adversity and it's all in how what you choose to do with that and how you frame it and how you move forward.

Nichols: Yeah, because I've read you say that. You know everyone has a cancer. It could be a financial cancer could be a relationship cancer. Everyone has something, but it's how you deal with it. And I look at your story and we'll get into it but I just look at you how courageous you were during all of that time and not just courageous but we'll get into what you're doing today. Talk to me a little bit about when the doctor came in and said you had cancer, what were your first thoughts?

Greige: Well, originally I thought this is going to be a little interruption. I thought, well being a nurse, well, we'll just go in, we'll do a colon resection we'll cut the bad part out. There might be some hiccups along the way, but it all seriously, would just be a short interruption. So I didn't, I really just... Oh, no big deal. And I think somewhat self-preservation, I didn't think about going over to get the scans. We just went and did it, but it was that evening when I got the phone call that it had metastasized to my liver, already that the reality set in, and I had in-between that time, the coming home from the hospital and getting a phone call.

I had Googled the American Cancer Society, and colon cancer, and it said stage one, stage two, stage three, and when I got to stage four, it said five-year survival rate of 6%, and I shut down the computer and went on about my day, so when I got the phone call that it had moved to my liver, which put me in the Stage 4. My first visual was of my daughter on her wedding day in this

beautiful wedding gown in my two sisters standing next to her, and it was almost like I was floating above her looking down, and my sisters were saying if your mother was here today, she would tell you what a beautiful woman you are inside and out and what a fantastic mother you're going to make one day. And just so those things. We laugh because I'm like, my son was not even on my radar screen. We kind of joke about that, but... Just my daughter. Poor Kyle.

Nichols: But we love you Kyle.

Greige: It comes back around. I'll share that in a little bit but that comes back around.

Nichols: In other words, Teri you're a miracle. You are a miracle that you're here sitting across from me when 6% survive, right?

Greige: I call it the 6% rule. Somebody's gotta be in the 6%. So, why not be me?

Nichols: So talk to us then about what was your road to recovery, what was that like? how long did it take? You went through chemo, you went through radiation? I'm sure.

Greige: So I was diagnosed at age 48. I like to always take a minute and talk about colon cancer and a minute of educating because I know we can save lives. So you should start screening at 50. Now, American Cancer Society says it really should start screening at 45. so this is a new initiative because the great and young people as early as in their early 20s, is skyrocketing. So thank you, one, for having me here today.

So I can just put a little plug in about that. And the reason I so firmly believe in that Lisa because two weeks after I was diagnosed, I said, my sisters were older, they were in the early 60s, they had never had colonoscopy both went one had pre-cancers polyps and my other sister diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer, so I call myself an accidental advocate. Everybody needs to know about their family history. That's what's really important to me.

Nichols: It's so important, and sometimes we think we can put those things off, but we know research has shown us that the earlier you catch it, right?

Greige: So colon cancer is the one cancer that can be prevented, it's treatable, and beatable... If found early. So I had my conspired radiation, I had chemotherapy, I had a colon resection liver resection more chemo and then I was placed on that, took about a year and then I was placed

on maintenance chemotherapy, which I was on for about eight years, I had 2 re-occurrences on, and again, in my liver and then it metastasized to both my lungs so then I had bilateral lung resections. Here's where the miracle comes in. I've been on a chemo break for about 18 months. We monitor my condition with scans and lab work and I just say, I make the most of every day, and I kind of live in three-month increments. And just an attitude of gratitude.

Nichols: Yeah, I love it.

AD: Where we're going to take a quick break and then we'll be back with Teri.

Nichols: So Teri, the road to recovery. That had to be a really hard time for you. So how did you maintain your positivity during that period of time?

Greige: That's an interesting question. I get this a lot and there's really two I think big storylines in my life and the other besides of dealing with cancer and living with cancer now, it would be that I'm a recovering alcoholic and addict. I'm proud to say one day at a time. I just celebrated 26 years of sobriety. People ask me a lot like, how do you deal with your cancer? And basically, I always say I have an outline of living for living, and that would be the 12 Steps. And I took many of those principles and applied those to dealing and living with cancer too. So, acceptance turning it over one day at a time all those little tools life tools that I've learned, I just was able to utilize that when dealing with this other adversity.

Nichols: So can you run through a few of those? You just did? But for people that don't know the 12 steps, if this is something... And I've heard this from so many people, that the 12 steps can apply in all sorts of situations in your life, do you remember those?

Greige: I think I just really touched on probably the ones that are most important to me, a lot of times, we say I can He can, I'll let him. And that can be a community of people that can be your faith that can be anything, but I think the whole idea that you're not alone, that you don't walk through your journey, by yourself, there are others to support you. It's about accepting it's about moving forward, it's about how you frame things. It's about one day at a time.

Nichols: I live by that motto. We have a special needs daughter. And I remember after she was born, somebody just said don't look too far in the future, just take one day at a time, and sometimes that's all you can do. That's all you can handle it is one day at a time, so I love that. I think that's great advice for anybody going through some sort of adversity. You had kind of

alluded to this before, and you said you got to cross the biggest finish line that you could imagine, and I'm assuming that was your ironman in Kona, is that the one that you're referring to you? So talk to us about that. So you were diagnosed with cancer, you went through your road to recovery, and then in 2011 you actually got to do the Ironman in Kona.

Greige: I never gave up that idea of fulfilling this huge dream of going to the World Championship, the summer of 2011. So I'd been through treatment for a year and on maintenance chemo for a year. I sent my story into Ironman and that's where my Kyle story kind of comes in. I did this little email, and I said, I used the cancer card. I used the five years, 6%, I said I have 3 goals now in life. One is to live long enough to celebrate 25 years of marriage 2 is to live long enough to see my daughter and my son get married, my dream not theirs. And 3 to do the Ironman World Championship and the next morning I woke up and I had a response and I take it tens of thousands of these emails. So one of my message is, as your dreams, your goals, work them out there, they come through. And so then in October of 2011, they accepted me. I said that they tell five stories.

Little did I know that my world would come full circle. I talked about being on the treadmill and watching John roll across the finish line. And so, in 2011... 35 friends and family, my doctors, we all went to Kona, Hawaii and that's when I talk about never alone and build an army and I crossed the finish line, and it was... I wish everybody could have that experience. Whatever your finish line is. I wish you could have that experience.

Nichols: What did it feel like? What were your emotions?

Greige: I can't even describe it, I have a YouTube video of it and we can add that link if you like. But it was you just can't put words around it.

Nichols: So what I love about you is that you went through this, but you didn't stop there, you founded the organization, and that you are the founder of today. Powered by hope. And I didn't realize "powered by hope". That sounds great, but the hope, the crosstake is, how ordinary people endure. I love that. So tell us about power by hope and what you're trying to do to build awareness out there.

Greige: So power by hope, I got the slogan when I was going to Kona. I wanted everybody to have a t-shirt, and I thought "What can I put on this T-shirt? And in the middle of the night, that motto, came to me and since then, there's been a book written and it's called powered by hope.

And then people kept saying they were just inspired by my story and I wanted to be able to give hope to other people and how could I do that? And it came to me in the form of a medal.

When you hear the words, you have cancer, that truly is the greatest race of your life. And I could have a symbol of hope which was a medal to mark the race, then that would be something that they would have. And then I also... These coins of courage and this is part of our powered by hope mission is to touch those anybody really do we inspire we recognize, and we support those touched by cancer. So that's really what the powered by hope mission is about. We've kind of formed our own community and probably the largest part that I'm very proud of within this is under we go out into the community, we have a powered by hope team for cycling at the pedal the cause event, we have probably close to 250 members right now, we've raised almost 1.7 million for cancer research and it's about encouraging and uplifting one another on a daily basis and hope, hope is not just about that there's going to be a cure for cancer.

It's truly about, as I walk through this adversity, how can I make the most of every single day? Is it your faith is it your friends, is it your family? What and how can I do do this to the best of my ability? I really believe in order to keep something you have to give it away. And so it's just really this dichotomy like the more... And you can tell, I'm just getting all excited right now because I feel like the more I can give hope and inspire others and give it away, though I don't know the more I'm filled. It's crazy.

Nichols: It is so true. I always say, there's no proverb, it's more blessed to give than receive, and people are like really? But when you do that, it certainly is, and for you, Teri, you've been through it. So nobody can really step into those people's shoes like you can... And somebody that's actually been through what you've been through and just to give them hope. So what is your mission today?

Greige: I always say I have two major goals. It's to inspire others and to save lives, it's pretty simple.

Nichols: And when you're definitely doing that I know you are just by telling your story, the awareness and the one thing that I was thinking about when you were talking about how you... You just knew something wasn't right in your body and that I hear that so many times, because I've done a lot with American Heart Association. And one of the things they say nobody knows your body like you do, nobody feels like... You feel... So, if you feel something go have it checked out, don't wait because you're going to know your body and how it normally feels and it

feels abnormal. "Go get it checked out. What's the harm in that? But sometimes we just think... Oh, I'll do that. Yeah, it's probably just this or that. So if people don't take away anything else make health a really high priority.

Dan Forth, Wrote a book a long time ago, called "I dare you", and one of the things he says he calls it the four legged stool, but he says in that book he says wealth cannot buy health. It doesn't matter how rich you are now if you've got health issues. Wealth cannot buy health, but health can buy wealth. So his big four-legged stool and his number one was his health, he had to keep himself healthy, to do everything else for his family and his relationships in his career.

Greige: And sometimes, I feel that people are afraid of what might be found and I am not grateful that I got cancer but I am so grateful for all the blessings that it just brought me. Would I ever dream I'd be sitting here talking to you today or being able to help other people or living my life like an open book. No, but this is more than I ever dreamt up. I've lived more in the last 10 years, then I lived in 40. And for that, I'm very grateful.

Nichols: Awesome, I love it. Well, I want to talk to you about something extra, so I... What do you believe? I know that you've got not a team, but it is a team it's a community. Is there somebody in your life, Teri that you've observed as something extra? And I could surmise all kinds of something extras in you and what you think every leader needs? But I want to hear it from you.

Greige: This is what I love. I get to watch other people now share their experience and their strength and their hope and it might not have been something that they would have been comfortable with before. The cancer changes you. And it brings about parts. I think that they never knew they had. It allows them to step out of their comfort zone and they realized that giving others hope. Sharing their stories, gives people inspiration. It shows in the way one of the ways... One of the roads to go and he gives other people hope, and that's what I just love watching others give back and do these things as they navigate their own journey and their own adversity.

Nichols: Well, Terry, we're coming to the end of our time here, but I want to talk to you and give you an opportunity if there's anything that you want to tell our listening audience about maybe something that they could participate in that's coming up or anything like that. I want to give you the opportunity to do that.

Greige: Thanks, Lisa. Well, you could find powered by hope on the Internet at powered by hope at org. We have a Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram. Really, what I would say is, if you want to give hope to others you want a medal or a coin we give those out, you can contact us through our website, but if you'd like to join our team powered by hope for pedal the cause that bike event takes place the end of September 28 and 29, you can find pedal the cause.org, we'd love to grow our team, we love every penny of every dollar raised go to cancer research. St Louis is an unbelievable city so generous, the event is completely underwritten. So 100% of your fund raising goes to cancer research and stays here in St. Louis.

Nichols: And where does it start?

Greige: Chesterfield. So you can ride anybody. And that's why I'm like watch out Lisa here I come. You can ride anywhere from 10 miles to 100 miles. There's something for everybody and it is... I always see if I can get one person there. They're sold, they're back every single year.

Nichols: So it sounds like a great event in a great event. So if you're interested, get on the internet and join the powered by hope team to raise money for cancer research. Teri thank you so much for being here with us. It's just been a delight.

Greige: Well, thank you, Lisa, I'm honored to be able to share my story and to give hope to others.