

NF Stories Live- Meet Gail and Tim

Brandy: [00:00:06] Hello and welcome to NF Stories Live a show that shares people's journey of living with neurofibromatosis. I'm your host, Brandy and on today's episode, I thought with it almost being Valentine's Day, I'd love to share a love story of Gail and Time. Gail and Tim are not new to sharing their story. So I thought, what else would be nice to follow up and see where they are since they last sat down with us. Welcome Tim and Gail, thank you for joining me today.

Gail: [00:00:32] Thank you. Thank you for inviting us to share our story.

Tim: [00:00:36] Yes, Thank you.

Gail: [00:00:38] It's an amazing story, we think. And I mean when we tell other people about it and at our wedding, people were just like no dry eye in the crowd. So but yeah, maybe we'll start. I'm going to just start by giving a little back story to the story. First of all, I had a dog and his name is Caleb, and he was my best friend. He was always with me for 13 years. And 13 is a lucky number for both Tim and I. But anyway, my poor Caleb had to leave and go to the Rainbow Bridge, so I was just devastated. I'm going to start crying right now, even though I was like, oh my gosh, that was in 2010. So that was a long, long time ago anyway. So that was in July. And just around about that time, too, I used to work with Children's Services and one of my oh no, I'm sorry, I'm going to go back a year from then too. So one of my workers was just coming back from being out on a call. And I looked out onto the parking lot and she took a few steps and stopped and then took a few steps and stopped. And I thought, that's weird. That's not Brenda, something's up. So when she came in, I said, Brenda, are you OK? She said, no. And her speech was kind of broken. She said, I feel really tingly on my left side, so. Oh, my gosh, we phoned 911 and the ambulance came and I rode in the ambulance with her to the hospital and I was sitting in the front seat and Brenda's on the stretcher in the back with one of the paramedics and he was asking about me. So Brenda's trying to match make me while having a stroke. So it was like, oh, my gosh, OK, OK. Yeah, that didn't work out so good. But anyway, so now we're a year later and I've just lost my Caleb and I'm coming back to work after being on vacation. And I walked by Brenda's office and she's like, Gail! Gail! And she's on the phone and she's got thumbs in the air

and I need to talk to you and I said ok Brenda, come see me when when you get off the phone then. And so she came running down. And you have to know Brenda, because she's from the East Coast and very friendly and just very outgoing. Had it been anybody else on the phone, the story would not be where we are right now. Anyway, so Brenda came running down at the little and she was shaking. She was so excited. She had Tim's name on a piece of paper with a phone number. She said, I know I tried to set you up last year and that didn't work. But I got a good feeling about this because there's this guy, the social worker in B.C. that I'm on the phone with. And you guys just have so much in common. You both like dogs and you both cheer for that football team from Saskatchewan and. Well, and he has the same thing you do.

Tim: [00:03:27] So tell the story about how I got talking to Brenda. So quite often we have families who move from province to province and there are some children visiting the grandparents in Nanaimo the parents were here, and we need somebody to go and talk to the kids out in Nanaimo as part of the investigation that was going on here, the assessment. So I mentioned you want to talk about the bumps on my body as a great way to break the ice with kids, you know, and.

Gail: [00:03:56] So he's saying this to Brenda on his phone,

Tim: [00:03:58] I am saying this to Brenda on the phone. Yeah. And she said, what do you mean bumps? So I said, well, I have a thing called neurofibromatosis bet you've never heard of it. And she said, well, actually, I have a co-worker with it. Are you single?

Gail: [00:04:11] So she put the case aside and started to interrogate him,

Brandy: [00:04:16] 20\20 questions.

Gail: [00:04:17] Ya, she said, you like dogs, you have to like dogs. Yeah. So she got all the information, came running down and she said, I think he's about your age. I don't know how old you are, Gail, but I think he's your age and has the same thing you do. And here's his number. You should phone him and I said oh Brenda, that's so kind and thoughtful of you. Yeah, I'll give him a call, but not today because I have a doctor's appointment. And she was like, so does he see like so much in common.

Brandy: [00:04:47] Everything was lining right up.

Gail: [00:04:49] Everything. And that's just it, because, again, if it had been any other worker, they would not have picked up on Tim's comment about bumps and then start asking him. But because Brenda was a matchmaker, like I said, she tried to match make me while having a stroke. So anyway, I said, OK, I'll call them. So I left. I phoned him and left him a message. And we played telephone tag a couple of days and then he called back and it was on Friday the 13th. We just but and it was just for a moment. But he said, here's my home phone number. Call me on the weekend. So I whoops sorry I just a scanning thing came up, but anyways, I called him on Sunday and we talked for over an hour and we found out we had so much in common. We're both from Saskatchewan and I went to university in Saskatoon, and that's where Tim had lived as well. And we lived just a few blocks from each other. We went to the same social work program. We had drove the same vehicle. We both had Coca-Cola collections, the same plastic surgeon in Saskatoon. It was so nice to talk to Tim, because we're getting to know each other just on the telephone, right? There was no. Nothing really physical about it at that point. Yeah, but we both the neurofibromatosis and but we shared some stories of what our life was like growing up with that.

Gail: [00:06:28] But it was just it was just amazing. And then he asked me what kind of music I liked.

Tim: [00:06:34] John Denver like folk music like John Denver?

Gail: [00:06:38] Yeah. I said, I can't believe you're admitting to liking John Denver. I said, I'd love John Denver. I wanted to marry him.

Gail: [00:06:48] Well, anyway, anyway, so we.

Gail: [00:06:50] Close enough close enough.

Gail: [00:06:53] So we talked every night for over an hour. And it was just the more we talked, the more we found out we had in common. And and again, it was just so nice to have somebody that knew what new some of the experiences that I went through. And the same for Tim. And then Tim on his end had some colleagues, some female

colleagues in his office helping him out, saying, you know, ladies really like flowers. Oh, he sent me some flowers and this is where my Caleb came in as well, because I sent Tim a picture of me and my two dogs at the time. So and this is where you sent me some flowers with a stuffed dog that looked just like my Caleb.

Brandy: [00:07:33] Oh my heart.

Gail: [00:07:37] So I said, I gotta go meet this man in person. I got to go. So. Yeah,

Tim: [00:07:41] Yeah. And now I actually sent the flowers as she phoned me to thank me and we started making arrangements when she is going to come and see me right then and there on that phone call. Yeah, I sent an email to my supervisor asking for the vacation time. Yeah. and I think it actually got approved while we were on the phone together.

Brandy: [00:08:03] Everybody wanted this to happen.

Gail: [00:08:05] Yes everybody wanted it to happen. Yeah. Yeah. So I mean, we had so many, so many people helping out in the background. Right. But people were going you can't just go and see him Gail you can't just spend the weekend with someone said I've talked to him for ever like I have 30 hours under my belt. So I feel like I really know him.

Tim: [00:08:25] And we both work for child services, I come with a criminal record check.

Brandy: [00:08:28] Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah. Oh, that is so awesome. Like to be have been so close to each other all, like almost your whole life and never crossing until it was the right time.

Gail: [00:08:41] Till it was the right time. Absolutely. And that's exactly what I think can happen. So yeah. Because again when we talked and Tim said he delivered pizzas and delivered pizzas, probably in the area where I, I lived. But again, it was just yeah, our paths just went across. And I mean, who knows if we would have met at that point, if things would have been the same, because it was again, just so nice to get to know him over the telephone and not have any, you know. Yeah. So anyway, I went to see him

and then he came to see me and we were back and forth and went down to San Francisco to his niece's wedding And and then I went, oh, it was coming out to see him. And Tim said, make sure you bring your hiking boots. And and then I could tell something was suspicious because Tim cannot keep a secret. And then I found out later, everybody in my office knew and my best friends knew that he was going to ask me to marry him. And so tell them how you you did that Tim.

Tim: [00:09:45] Well we went out to Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island and for those who have never been there. It's down the highway towards Port Alberni and it's an old growth forest with great big trees, some of them are here like 10 feet across, 12 feet across, and we just walk along a path. We find an off area, we walk off the beaten path. And Gail sort of walked off and I followed her. And that's where I put my hand on her and she kind of zipped it off on a few feet away. I think she was nervous about something. You.

Gail: [00:10:20] Cause I was a little suspicious

Brandy: [00:10:21] I was just going to say she knew you were up to something see.

Gail: [00:10:24] Yeah.

Tim: [00:10:25] And then she sort of made a comment to me, are you sure you want to do this? And I started to sing in the words partially singing the lyrics to Annie's song, which is a beautiful love song by John Denver. And after the first chorus, I asked her to marry me and she said yes.

Brandy: [00:10:42] Oh, that was the most sweetest thing like this music and all. You have a big heart, Tim. I'm telling you.

Gail: [00:10:50] Yes he does he has a huge, huge heart And that's just what I love about a love about him. Every day, every morning, he kisses me goodbye as he heads off to work. And I'm retired, so I'm still sleeping. So that tells me he loves me. And every night he does the same thing. You tucks me in the bed if he's staying up late or pats me and says I love you and gives me a big kiss as well that he's he's got a beautiful, beautiful heart and beautiful soul.

Brandy: [00:11:19] Oh awe

Gail: [00:11:21] We decided to have a wedding in his sister's backyard, we didn't. Neither one of us wanted anything. You know, big, but it was big in so many other ways, we only had about 70 people there and I wore a dress that I got in Mexico for thirty dollars, just a little sun dress. and we told people to come in your shorts and flip flops and whatever you want to wear. And it was just it was beautiful. We did our own vows and I included because when I first met Tim and I'd go for a dog walk in the neighborhood, one of the neighbor ladies was so surprised. She said, what you found somebody who's interested in you? And she was just so surprised. And I said, Yeah, yeah, I did. And she said, Well, I guess there's a lid to every pot then So I included part of that in my. My vows was that he was the lid to my pot and the king of my heart and so it was a beautiful wedding and yeah, just outside in Mill Bay.

Brandy: [00:12:28] Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's beautiful. Yeah,

Gail: [00:12:31] it was beautiful. yeah,

Brandy: [00:12:33] It's the love. It doesn't matter what you're wearing, who's there. It's the love that you all share. Right. And they were all there for you guys and your guys is love that's just so beautiful. Like that is amazing love story. And that you guys still to this day Tim showing her love every single day,

Gail: [00:12:50] Every single day, every single day.

Brandy: [00:12:52] It's like you're dating all the way along. Right. And it's from the inside. It's from the inside. You love the person. Not anything else, right? Yes.

Gail: [00:13:01] Yeah. And that's just. Yeah, that's just too. And that's what I was referring to about the physical part, because I have many more bumps than Tim does, like 90 percent of my body is covered in it. But I mean, so many when you get to know me, you don't see the bumps, you see past the bumps. Right.

Brandy: [00:13:17] And I still think you guys are beautiful. So, yeah. And handsome sorry.

Gail: [00:13:22] We're all worthy of love And and Tim, as I said, he's he's an amazing man who I mean, he still gets into trouble a lot, too, when he forgets to do things. So he knows when he's in trouble. And Tim, how do you know when you're in trouble?

Tim: [00:13:37] Well, my name is Tim, sometimes I am Timothy. Sometimes it's Timothy Ryan. Oh. But I hardly ever anymore get to hear Timothy Ryan Columbia.

Brandy: [00:13:53] That one is when you've topped the tier on that one, haven't you? Yeah.

Gail: [00:13:57] Yeah. When I had some surgery and the nurse, Tim had to come with me because I needed a responsible adult.

Tim: [00:14:06] I am a husband.

Gail: [00:14:09] Anyway. So the nurse was explaining to me what I can and can't do and she was like, yeah, you can't do this and you can't do that and you probably shouldn't do any of this for several months.

Tim: [00:14:22] Not years.

Gail: [00:14:23] Yeah. Do you understand Timothy she spoke to him. So it was the same for.

Tim: [00:14:29] We had also when I went for one of my many MRIs, the woman called out Timothy, well actually I go by Tim, and she sort of looked over to Gail, and she said you have a middle name and I said well it's Ryan. OK, Timothy Ryan, you know I am a mother you know,

Gail: [00:14:47] So I get it. I get some support from the ladies out there.

Brandy: [00:14:52] Yeah, they know what you're dealing with, right? I.

Gail: [00:14:54] Yeah. Sometimes they know husbands. Yeah. So anyway, so. Yeah. So it's been really a beautiful, beautiful time with Tim and he's an amazing man who is just always there for me. And it's been a challenging time these last couple of years since he's come into my life. He's needed to help me through some medical stuff as well. And a couple of years ago, 2016 I got a scare on the left side of my breast because I was born with a large plexiform tumour on the left side of my breast that grew as I grew up. And I mean, so it was from under my armpit to the middle of my chest. And then it just it hung and it grew and to the point where I could tuck it into my pants. Oh, wow. Because, yeah, when I was younger, too, I didn't have any of these bumps except for this very large tumour. So as a result, I was teased a lot and bullied a lot. But I mean, I didn't let that stop me from doing the things that I played all kinds of sports and and swam and ball and whatever I needed to do. And then when I turned 20, I had surgery to have it removed, but because it bled so much I almost didn't make it. And so they called my family to my side. And but I'm determined, I'm a stubborn young lady and I made it through did not really knowing what was happening. I mean, that stubbornness comes from a very young age, too. When I was in grade two. Yeah, I can't sing just a little. I know, but I think I can so in grade 2 my teacher told me not to sing during a competition that we're in, 10 little speckled frogs That's my favorite song. How can I not sing that's.

Brandy: [00:16:37] Exactly!

Gail: [00:16:39] She said, just mouth the words OK Gail. I was like, oh, no, I can't. So we went to competition and I sang loud and hard and we lost.

Brandy: [00:16:49] That's OK. You gave it your all. That's all that matters. That's it.

Gail: [00:16:53] So that determination has been with me from a young age. So I made it to that first surgery and I had I've had about 40 surgeries over my lifetime, too. And in '96, I because they couldn't get all of it the first time, they had to debulk more and remove some more of the tumour and part of my ribs this time. And I was in the hospital for two weeks. And so when I go for my annual mammogram because of the tissue on my left side, it's a very dense, thick neurofibromatosis tissue, OK? Mammograms don't work for me. So I get MRIs. In 2016. They found an unusual bump that they looked and

they thought, oh, better do a biopsy. They did. And they couldn't determine or decide or agree if it was cancer or just an infection. So I'm going. What do you mean you can't decide? Let's do something this. So that was another time when Tim had to come with me and was clearly told, I can't sweep, I can't do any laundry, I can't do this.

Tim: [00:18:02] For six years.

Gail: [00:18:06] So as it turned out, it was just an infection. But I get, I get MRIs every two years just to make sure and follow up. So then this last year I had my MRI and I got a call from my doctor the next day and he said there's an unusual spot on the MRI, so we're going to send you for a biopsy. And he called me the next day and he said, yeah, it's. It's concerning, so we'll need to do some surgery and it turned out that it was cancer in the other breast now in the right breast. And so I had a lumpectomy and then they took some lymph nodes as well. But it was a small tumour, which was great. And yeah, yeah, so it was Yeah! All the margins around the tumour were clear and the lymph nodes were clear. So they think they got it all, but they were still recommending radiation. But then when I went to see the radiation oncologist, she was very concerned because I had neurofibromatosis and. I thought that I might be more sensitive to the radiation treatment.

Brandy: [00:19:22] Ok.

Gail: [00:19:22] And I said, well, if I didn't have neurofibromatosis, would you recommend radiation? And she said, yeah, I would. And I said, then we need to do the radiation. My sister died of breast cancer. I have another sister because my mom had seven children. And I didn't know my mom because she died when I was three. So I went to live with an aunt and my younger sister and the rest of the siblings were sent wherever. So my mom was, my mom's three youngest children have NF, are they did. My sister, who died of breast cancer 12 years ago, had NF as well? And then my other sister, who's four years younger than I am, who also has NF and also has cancer. So she's going through lots of different treatments as well. Her cancer and her NF is internal, most of the bumps are growing inside of her, not on the outside.

Brandy: [00:20:17] Oh, wow. So was it did it come from your mom or your dad or like you were saying?

Gail: [00:20:23] My mom had neurofibromatosis, so I inherited from her, whereas Tim is a mutation.

Tim: [00:20:31] I am a mutation spontaneous, I am a mutant.

Brandy: [00:20:35] You're like my son. You're like my son. He's spontaneous as well. Yeah.

Gail: [00:20:39] Yeah. So so I said, no, I want the radiation. I mean, back to my meeting with the oncologist. I said, I want the radiation because I want to do everything I can to try and make sure this cancer doesn't come back. And I said, so what? What are your concerns? And she said, well, you might get more bumps. I said, well, I get more bumps every day anyway.

Brandy: [00:21:00] It doesn't make a difference.

Brandy: [00:21:02] No, no. And she said, well, you might just be more sensitive to the treatment itself. And so she was just concerned. And I said, I know that some people I mean, I seen on some of the Facebook groups I'm involved in that they use radiation to try and treat the NF I mean it isn't always like chemo. And radiation doesn't always work for NF. But anyway, I said, no, I need to do it. And she said, OK, then we'll schedule you in then. And then a week later, she phoned me. I mean, it's not very often you get a call from the surgeon, but she phoned me and she said, I just want to let you know that I checked with a colleague of mine who has a patient with NF and is giving that patient radiation and they're fine. And so she said, I feel more at ease now that doing it to you, so when I met with her the first time to Tim came with me because that's this husband thing to do.

Brandy: [00:21:58] It's his duties.

Gail: [00:22:00] It's his duties. So now why am I telling you this part? I'm getting older, too. So sometimes my .

Tim: [00:22:08] She has the same sentiment, but all the stuff Gail won't be able to do.

Gail: [00:22:11] Yeah. No, no. That was the nurse who said that.

Tim: [00:22:15] The nurse.

Gail: [00:22:15] Yeah. Anyway, it'll it'll come to me why I'm telling you that. But anyway, so. Oh no I know why. Because I said I said to her too I said I'd love letting people know about neurofibromatosis and I'd love to educate people including doctors. I mean, I, the doctor once say to me, what is that all over you can't you just get a skin transplant? So, no, that's not going to work. But so I said to her, if. Why don't you use me as a test subject, not a test subject, but as an educational so that other oncologists will now learn from my experience and having neurofibromatosis and breast cancer. And so when she phoned me to say she was feeling more at ease, she said, are you still willing to share your story? Can we take some pictures of you before and after? Absolutely. I want to do whatever I can again to to help, you know,

Brandy: [00:23:15] Bring the awareness.

Gail: [00:23:17] To bring awareness and to help individuals with neurofibromatosis who also have breast cancer to know my journey that I went through. So, yeah. Oh, yeah. So I had my 15 sessions of radiation and that was a breeze. I mean, you drive there, took you longer to drive there than the session itself was like ten minutes, but the two weeks after was like Yikes, you know, because I have lots of bumps around the breast and those broke open and got really quite sore. But I had the she had given me a prescription for an ointment and that helped and cleared up and so I'm doing a lot better because my last radiation was December 18th. Surgery was the end of September. And then radiation started and I was finished radiation December 18th and so it's almost been two months and I'm feeling good, like tired, but that's with anybody.

Brandy: [00:24:18] Yeah, as you get older, you get a little bit slower, but that's OK.

Gail: [00:24:23] Well, and they say to it, the radiation that that that happens, the fatigue now look better.

Brandy: [00:24:29] I was just going to say, how long did they say roughly how long it would take for you to fully recuperate or is this just ongoing?

Gail: [00:24:37] It could be just ongoing. And they said, I mean, to deal with your fatigue, you got to make sure you get up and go for lots of walks. I mean, given covid having cancer in the time of covid it has been proving to be a challenge as well. So, I mean, because it's it's. Yeah, you can't Tim couldn't always come to some appointments or he couldn't come to my treatment all the time and but it's you make the best of it and you do what you can and you choose to continue to do what you need. So I mean, it affects different people differently, but it could be like a year that I my energy level might be really low, but again, I, I go for walks every day in the minus 40, that's a little harder. And I make this guy come with me.

Tim: [00:25:28] I gladly go with her.

Brandy: [00:25:30] Oh, there you go. Come on now. Who's walking who.

[00:25:36] Yeah. Well, and Piper. Because now we only have one dog. I had one dog and then two dogs and then three. And then one and then two. So and but all my dogs loved Tim as well, especially this one that we have right now. She is Tim's dog. I got her when I met Tim. That was one other thing that we had in common as well. I phoned him just shortly after we were going out, and it was the year we and we met in August of the following March, I phoned him and I said, I'm going to get another dog. Are you OK with that? And he said, absolutely so. And I said, I'm I'm naming her Piper. And that was the name of his dog growing up.

Tim: [00:26:18] Yeah.

Gail: [00:26:18] And I didn't know that. And that wasn't the reason why I named her Piper. I said, I just like the name Piper from a TV show that I used to watch called The Charmed Sisters with the three sisters who were all witches was.

Brandy: [00:26:32] I know that one

Gail: [00:26:33] Yeah the Piper. Yeah anyways so Piper is like Tim's girl. We go for walks and she walks beside him and looks behind me or if we are sitting watching TV shows she will nuzzle up to him and give me that look like he's my guy.

Brandy: [00:26:47] Yeah.

Gail: [00:26:49] Oh yeah. Anyway so yeah Tim takes good care of me and he did throw up my, my treatments and my surgeries and.

Brandy: [00:26:59] It's wonderful, so wonderful to hear that you guys have had that support and being able to be there for each other and hear each other's stories and just have have that support and know that you're not alone. Right. It's hard out there. Right. So, yeah.

Gail: [00:27:15] Yeah, it is. And I mean, weh have shared our stories many times through different avenues and different newspaper articles and radio stations and TV stations. And so I was walking the dogs a couple last summer and these young kids were smoking a joint, near one of the schools and they yelled out, is that her to the other guy and they said because they said, you're on Snapchat. Your YouTube story, Born Different is now on Snapchat. I don't even know what Snapchat is, but they said, wow, it is really you. And that was an awesome story. So it was so nice to see these young 15, 16 year old kids having an appreciation for two older folks sharing their love story and sharing their journey.

Tim: [00:28:02] It's also, you know, when Gail was taking the dogs for a walk or with Piper, I think. Walked past a school just a block away from here. Yeah, I can't remember exactly how it happened, but one little girl, one girl came up and talked to her and asked if she was the one in the news. Because we were just on a local TV station. The younger girl came up and said that.

Gail: [00:28:28] She just she was waiting for a bus and when she said, Oh, can I pet your dog? Then she looked up at me and she said, Are you that the lady from the news? were you on the news with your husband telling your story? And I said, Yeah, that was probably me. She said it was so amazing and awesome and I just need to let you know that you have given me and inspired me to do better. She said in phys-ed I

couldn't do this one activity where I had to jump up like stand when you're standing, you gotta to leap up on to ledge, she said I couldn't do it. But today I did, she said, because I was determined to do it. If you can go on TV and talk about whatever, I can do this. And so you've inspired me to challenge myself, so I mean, we've been getting so many of those, when we go out and see people, it's yeah, they just say thank you so much. And so which is like reinforcing us to go. OK, well, there is yeah.

Gail: [00:29:27] It's nice for people like you. Like, I wish more people would share their stories because the more we get out there, the more awarenesses, the more understanding. Right. And it just it's so nice because you guys so willingly share. Right. And you guys are so like the little girl said, you guys are so inspiring. Right. And determined and strong. Like, you just. Yeah, you inspire us all and your love story, it just like puts it on a nice little bow. Right. It's just.

[00:29:55] Oh yeah. It's very it is very good. And it's again, it's I mean I've never, never really hid, as I said, you know, lost singing competitions and I am determined to do this and whatever, asked not to swim in swimming pools or don't touch the food or sat down beside somebody at a concert and they got up and moved and somebody else at the bus, they they don't want to sit beside me, but I just take those as opportunities to to try and educate people. And even the little nurses that I met who said when I'm dead and gone and in front of God, you're going to be beautiful. And I said, well, I think I'm beautiful right now. And she said, no, you're not. Yeah I am and that's. And she walked away. And I just thought, no, I am, because you have to have that that hope and that self-esteem. And I've had people stop me and say, I wish you could meet my brother. He's not ever left the house. And he has the same thing you do. And I wish he'd get out and look at you getting out and about. And I said, yeah, I'm just this is I have to live my life and this is and I'm going to live my best life ever. You know, there's days that you have bad days just like everybody else where you think ohh grr, especially now because I'm going through menopause again.

Brandy: [00:31:13] Oh,

Gail: [00:31:14] Don't tell Tim So yes I was finished that by the time I met him because I went through it early and then finished.

Brandy: [00:31:24] Oh, and you're going through it again. Is that from having cancer and that or.

Gail: [00:31:29] Yeah, it's related to the breast cancer because I'm on a medication for five years because my cancer was fed by estrogen. So I'm on this hormone medication that changes my hormones. So anyway,

Brandy: [00:31:44] You get to do it all over again. Yeah.

Gail: [00:31:47] So the hot flashes and cold, night sweats.

Tim: [00:31:49] And this all started up again right before I retire.

Brandy: [00:31:54] Oh no.

Tim: [00:31:55] I get to spend more time at home with her.

Brandy: [00:31:58] Just to support her and help her along on this journey.

Gail: [00:32:02] Help her through this journey as well. So yeah. So in so many ways Tim came into my life in a good time as well with my Caleb who I lost my best buddy friend. And, you know, and then just through some more of my medical stuff, it's nice to have somebody else there with you through some of those journeys and.

Brandy: [00:32:23] Yeah. Oh, I love your guys love story. I love it. It's like perfect love, perfect timing. It just.

Gail: [00:32:31] Yeah, well, we're just you know, people have been writing letters to Ellen and trying to get us on the Ellen show too and I'm saying, well and we need to get a movie, get Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan to play us.

Brandy: [00:32:44] That would be wonderful.

Gail: [00:32:45] Wouldn't that be fun? Yeah, Tom Hanks because that's who I love too Tom Hanks

Brandy: [00:32:50] There you go. There you go. Oh, that would be wonderful. Oh, well, thank you so much, you guys. I am like like everybody says, you guys are inspiring and you uplift our community by being so out there and bringing awareness and not not backing down and living your life to the best, like you said. And yeah, I'm so grateful that you guys sat down with me today to share your love story on this Valentine's Day coming up. And thank you for sharing about your breast cancer and keeping us up to date. And hopefully in again another few years, we can check in with you guys again and see where you guys are and see where we're at.

Gail: [00:33:28] Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Because Tim retires this summer, so, yeah, we'll be on different journeys and hopefully covid will be over by then. And because every Friday night we always go what we call date night and go out for dinner and take turns treating each other. And so that's been a little challenging. But Tim has started his own business. I'm his only client right now and he's not skip the dishes, but he's tossed the dishes. So we'll order and he goes and picks it up, like I said am his only client.

Brandy: [00:33:59] That's OK. That's wonderful. There you go. Yeah a whole new journey with both of you retired and you get to spend so much time together.

Gail: [00:34:09] And doing a little bit of traveling and visiting people that we haven't seen in a long time and just doing what we need to do to continue to take care of each other.

Brandy: [00:34:18] That's wonderful.

Tim: [00:34:19] Enjoy. Enjoy our lives.

Brandy: [00:34:21] There you go. Now, it was just you two and you guys get to just worry about you guys and enjoy each other every day. That'll be wonderful.

Gail: [00:34:30] Yes. Yeah. And continue with our optimistic attitudes and our hope that things will get better and people with NF will feel better about going out. And people that don't have it will have an understanding and acceptance and because, as I said earlier,

when you get to know me, you don't see the bumps anymore, you just see Gail and her bright eyes and that mischievous smile,

Brandy: [00:34:57] Just bubbly attitude like your personality, so bubbly and then you got Tim who just like me, just lifts everything up. But it's just you guys are just wonderful.

Gail: [00:35:07] Well, thank you. Yeah.

Tim: [00:35:08] Yeah. I always keep positive. Me I have always done that all my life I've had challenges and challenges growing up with learning disabilities and poor coordination, but. You know, just live life, go ahead, because no matter what I do, I still have NF. I still have everything else I have. So I just push that aside and go forward.

Gail: [00:35:31] We always say, too, that we have NF, but NF doesn't have us.

Brandy: [00:35:34] Oh, awesome So if you were to do.. There you go, I will fend it with this. If you guys were to build or build design a billboard for N, what would you put on it? What would you say? What would you have on it?

Gail: [00:35:48] Well, we did a and I'm trying to remember what we said to we did. Bookmarkers for the symposium. And it was never, never forget the power of having. So we had NF Hope. So, Never forget the power of having an optimistic perspective everyday, that's what it was. Yeah. So just how that was because we think that that's that's just a big part of it, is having that great attitude and and surrounding yourself. I get lots of messages from people saying, what do I do? I don't you know, I've had people tell me too that have you ever thought of assisted suicide? Maybe you should think of that and I'm going, well Why? Anyways so they say, well, how can you like where is that coming from and what are you doing? And I just said, you know what? You choose to be happy. Just choose it, you can choose to be miserable, but that's not going to get you anywhere. So I think the billboard would be that never forget the power of having an optimistic outlook. That is every every day, every day, every day, every day. So I wake up in the morning and be thankful that, you know, you have each other and that you're breathing and you get to do whatever, we don't live a luxury life, we have a small little house here and but we're happy and we make each other happy and support each other, as weird are some of the requests are that we have I just turned 60 this summer

and had a request from because I couldn't have a big party because I love parties. I'd love to, but I couldn't invite 60 people to a party. So I contacted 60 people, 60 friends and said, well, how about if you get your picture taken with me? And I'm a little tech challenge, but Tim's not so he helped me put a book together of all my pictures, of all the 60 people. Everybody most everybody has got a mask on, cause you know, but

Tim: [00:37:53] And even some of our friends and people who we know who really don't like having their picture taken.

Brandy: [00:37:59] Yeah,

Tim: [00:38:00] Actually stepped up and had their picture taken for Gail's birthday.

Brandy: [00:38:03] Oh, that's awesome. That's wonderful. I love it.

Gail: [00:38:06] So I would love to do things like that, too. And as I said Tim, he's very patient with me and technology because I just said, oh yeah, blah, blah, blah, blah, because I don't know what you're saying or how that works or whatever. And I didn't even know he didn't even have Internet when he would come visit me we would always have to borrow my neighbors.

Brandy: [00:38:27] Ah, there you go but it work. Right you made it work.

Tim: [00:38:30] Now she has an iPad and a computer,

Brandy: [00:38:34] But you're there to help her when she gets stuck.

Gail: [00:38:37] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Brandy: [00:38:39] So awesome. Awesome. Thank you very much, guys. And we'll see you hopefully in a few years. So thank you for sharing.

Tim: [00:38:48] Thank you.

Gail: [00:38:48] Thank you. It's so nice to meet you.

Tim: [00:38:50] Nice meeting you.

Brandy: [00:38:51] Nice meeting you Bye.

Gail: [00:38:53] Bye.