



[Listen to the podcast to hear Lechuga Fresca, the Latin Band I play with.](#)

A New Year with overflowing gratefulness. I'm grateful for my honey of 48 years. We still enjoy the time we have together. Ann went per diem as an occupational therapist. No return until we're both vaccinated. We adopted a dog, JoJo, a rescue Basenji mix. He's a 25-pound lap dog, part cat – possibly my mother reincarnated – an insatiable seeker of attention and considerable fear of being left out - sweet and loving, a substantial addition to our family and another living being in our flat. We miss visitors terribly.

I'm playing my sax more than ever. Weekly lessons since March, studying with Jeff Harrington, sax professor at the Berkeley College of Music. We've been working together for ten years—fantastic coach and cheerleader. I'm still playing regularly with [Lechuga Fresca](#), a Latin Band, despite the pandemic. [Here's a link to some of our rehearsals](#) (outside on our patio at a respectful distance). You'll hear some of the tunes as background in this episode—a warm and appreciative group. This fulfills an item on my bucket list to play in a horn section. What a hoot. We enjoy the music and playing together immensely. The neighbors saunter by to listen. 'We haven't heard live music since February.'



I see my sister, Jacky, the most of anyone outside our tiny pod – a meal or a walk every week. My daughter-in-law, Jessica, and I walk once a week as well. Oscar and I read to each other weekly on Zoom, working through Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. He reads Pokémon, Minecraft, and his own stories to me. Leon is almost 13, seven years younger than my age when I met Ann! Lord, we're getting old. Of these gifts, I am sincerely grateful.

As you know, the podcast continues – can you believe this is episode 105? I'm deeply grateful to my podcasting fellows from around the world, especially [Steve Heatherington](#) (Wales), [Curtis Cates](#) (Germany), [Ame Sanders](#), [Amanda Blodgett](#), [Tania Marien](#), [Heidi Frei](#), [Jane Beddall](#), [Fred Gutierrez](#), [Catherine Lynch](#), [Alice Merry](#) (Peru), [Matt Neil](#), [Bob Buckley](#) (England), and [Dafna Gold Melchior](#) (Israel).



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We meet weekly or bi-weekly on Zoom to critique and support each other in technology, storytelling, business management and strategy, marketing, and life. After two years we've become fast friends. A shout out to Kayla Nelson, my web/social media coach (I couldn't do this without you), and Joey van Leeuwen for his music (makes the podcast unique).

I'm honored to sit at the table as a member of the PCORI Board of Governors (Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute) with genuinely engaging, creative minds helping to lead a learning organization. A daunting responsibility as a patient/caregiver activist. I engaged my friend, Jan Oldenburg, as a coach to maximize my effectiveness. My focus is on partnerships with patients and caregivers and health equity in research.



I work closely with my friend and health decision-making partner, Laura Marcial, leading a small, mighty band of volunteers understanding the dynamics to find evidence-informed guidance for safe living in a pandemic.

I'm familiar with grief. Loss of a loved one, someone else's loved one, loss of abilities. How do I grieve for thousands dying of COVID-19 every day? I can't open my heart that wide and survive. Dribbles of grief in, occasional tears out. I know anger and frustration, but too much distress, my well-being plummets, my symptoms explode, and my effectiveness withers. So, I leverage



my expertise in appreciation and gratitude. As my friend, Catherine Lynch, said last week, 'I appreciate that I'm alive, we can put food on our table, and none of my immediate family has COVID-19 yet.'

Trust, trust, trust, a theme for the year. Trust comes in many flavors. Trust in me, trust in each other, trust in science, trust in life. I'm grateful for my privilege, my health, and most of all, you. Onward.



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