

**VERIZON  
UP TO SPEED LIVE  
October 25, 2021 12:00 PM ET**

>>Andy Choi: THANK YOU FOR JOINING US ON "UP TO SPEED" THIS MONDAY, OCTOBER 25TH.TODAY'S EPISODE IS DEDICATED TO THE COUNTLESS FIGHTERS ON OUR V-TEAM, AND BEYOND, WHO ARE BATTLING BREAST CANCER.JOINING US TODAY FOR A SPECIAL CONVERSATION IS KATHY GRILLO, SENIOR VP ON OUR PUBLIC POLICY TEAM. AND WHILE WE WILL SPEND SOME TIME TALKING ABOUT KATHY'S ROLE AS A LEADER, THE FOCUS TODAY WILL BE ON KATHY'S OWN JOURNEY WITH BREAST CANCER. AND WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO HAVE YOU HERE, KATHY. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR JOINING US. >> OH, THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME! >>Andy Choi: YEAH. ABSOLUTELY. IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU.YOU ARE NOW A THREE-TIME BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR.

THIS IS A JOURNEY THAT HAS SPANNED MORE THAN A DECADE FOR YOU WALK US THROUGH THAT JOURNEY. WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES THROUGH IT ALL? >>Kathy Grillo: YEAH, SO I WAS FIRST DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER IN 2004, SO I WAS 35, WHICH WAS REALLY A SHOCK TO ME AT THAT TIME. I WAS SO YOUNG. I DIDN'T HAVE -- YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T FIND IT THROUGH A MAMMOGRAM BECAUSE I WAS TOO YOUNG TO GET TESTED, AND IT WAS FAIRLY ADVANCED THERE.

IT WASN'T LIFE-THREATENING, BUT IT WAS CHALLENGING, SO I HAD SURGERY, I HAD RADIATION, AND THEN FOR 15 YEARS, I PRETTY MUCH HAD CLEAR SCANS.I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE. AND THEN IN 2018, I WAS DIAGNOSED AGAIN. I HAD SURGERY AGAIN, AND I CHOSE LESS AGGRESSIVE OPTIONS THERE, JUST FOR MY OWN QUALITY OF LIFE, AND SOME OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT I HAD, AND THEN THIS YEAR, IN 2021, IN THE MIDDLE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC.

>>Andy Choi: YEAH. >>Kathy Grillo: AND REALLY AT A DOWNPOINT IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN MY LIFE, IT WAS DIAGNOSED AGAIN. IT HAD COME BACK.SO THIS WAS A RECURRENCE FROM MY 2018 DIAGNOSIS. AND AFTER THREE TIMES, I MEAN, IT'S PRETTY CLEAR AT THAT POINT THAT THE ONLY OPTION IS A DOUBLE MASTECTOMY. SO THAT WAS A BIG -- THAT WAS A BIG DECISION FOR ME.

I HAD A LOT OF EMOTION AROUND THAT. >>Andy Choi: YEAH.

>>Kathy Grillo: AND, YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT CHALLENGES, I ALWAYS THOUGHT ABOUT THEM AT THE TIME AS CHALLENGES WITH A LITTLE "C." AND CHALLENGES WITH THE BIG "C," SO THERE ARE A LOT OF CHALLENGES WITH THE LITTLE "C" MEANING THERE'S A LOT OF UNCERTAINTY.YOU HAVE TO FIND DOCTORS. YOU GOTTA FIGURE OUT WHAT HOSPITAL YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN. YOU HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO TELL YOUR BOSS AND YOUR FRIENDS.BUT THEN THE BIG "C," THE BIG CHALLENGE, IS JUST THE FEAR. SO SINCE 2004, SINCE I WAS FIRST DIAGNOSED, THAT WAS LIKE MY WORST-CASE SCENARIO, RIGHT?

SO THE ONE THING EVERY YEAR WHEN I WENT TO GET A TEST THAT I WAS MOST AFRAID OF IS THAT I WOULD HAVE TO GET A MASTECTOMY .SO AGAIN, AT THIS TERRIBLE TIME IN OUR COUNTRY, AND A TIME WITH A LOT OF EMOTION AND A LOT OF CONFLICT, I HAD TO MAKE THAT DECISION.

AND HONESTLY, ANDY, I JUST SAID TO MYSELF, I CAN EITHER BE AFRAID AND SORT OF GIVE IN TO MY ANXIETY, OR I CAN SORT OF TAKE THIS ON AND SAY, IF I CAN FACE THAT FEAR, LIKE REALLY FACE IT, NOT BYPASS IT AND NOT AVOID IT, BUT JUST FACE IT, AND TAKE IT ON, AND GET TO THE OTHER SIDE OF IT, I COULD DO ANYTHING.

>>Andy Choi: AND THERE WAS GREAT POWER.c>> Kathy Grillo: AND THERE WAS GREAT POWER IN THAT.AND I EVEN REMEMBER THE NIGHT WHEN I MADE THAT DECISION, AND I SAID TO MYSELF, I'M NOT GOING TO

LET FEAR RUN MY LIFE.

I'M NOT GOING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THIS ANYMORE. I'M GOING TO TAKE IT ON AND IF I DO IT, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T DO.

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T OVERCOME.AND I REALLY HAD THAT SORT OF INTENTION THE WHOLE TIME, AND LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO SUGAR COAT IT. I MEAN, THERE WERE TOUGH MOMENTS, AND A LOT OF DAYS WHERE I REALLY STRUGGLED, BUT MOSTLY, I HAD THAT END POINT IN MIND WHERE I WOULD HONESTLY LIKE SOMETHING HERE, LIKE SITTING WITH YOU SAYING, HEY, I REALLY -- I REALLY BEAT THIS.

I REALLY DID IT. AND I'M PROUD OF MYSELF.

AND RIGHT NOW, LIKE, I'M HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER AND MORE BALANCED, AND MORE FUN THAN I'VE EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE. SO I FEEL REALLY GOOD ABOUT THAT.

>>Andy Choi: WELL, NOT ONLY DOES THE POWER RADIATE, BUT JUST THERE'S JOY AND STRENGTH IN YOUR VOICE, AND IT'S AN HONOR TO EVEN HAVE THIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU.SO THANK YOU FOR SHARING WITH US.I KNOW A BIG PART OF SHARING YOUR JOURNEY RIGHT HERE ON UP TO SPEED INCLUDES GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT ABOUT PREVENTION, EARLY DETECTION.THE STATS TELL US THAT NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF BREAST CANCER CASES ARE DIAGNOSED AT A LOCALIZED STAGE, WHICH IS A GOOD THING, NO SIGN THAT THE CANCER'S SPREAD, WHICH, FOR THE FIVE-YEAR SURVIVAL RATE OF THAT IS 99 PERCENT.

SO HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE THAT PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION IS SOMETHING THAT STAYS TOP OF MIND?

>>Kathy Grillo: YEAH, IT'S SO

IMPORTANT.AND I HAVE TO SAY FOR ME, IT WAS KEY. BECAUSE AT THIS POINT I WAS HAVING SCANS EVERY SIX MONTHS, BUT, YOU KNOW, SIX MONTHS PREVIOUS, I HAD BEEN COMPLETELY CLEAN, AND WHEN I WENT BACK IN JANUARY, THEY DETECTED IT.

BUT IT WAS SO EARLY AND IT WAS SO LOCALIZED, TO USE THE WORD THAT YOU USED, THAT IT WAS PRETTY EASY. I DIDN'T HAVE TO HAVE CHEMOTHERAPY. I DIDN'T HAVE TO HAVE RADIATION AGAIN. SO IT'S SO IMPORTANT. I MEAN, IT CAN REALLY SAVE YOUR LIFE AND NOT JUST SAVE YOUR LIFE, BUT JUST GIVE YOU QUALITY OF LIFE AT THE END OF THE PROCESS. IT CAN BE A VERY MANAGEABLE CONDITION, YOU KNOW, JUST LIKE YOU GET SICK AND YOU HAVE TO TAKE MEDICINE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, YOU GET SICK, AND YOU HAVE SURGERY, AND THEN YOU CAN THRIVE AND JUST FEEL GREAT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR HEALTH. SO I REALLY, REALLY HOPE THAT IF ANYTHING, THIS, YOU KNOW, TAKES ONE PERSON OR ONE WOMAN WHO DECIDES, YOU KNOW WHAT, I PUT IT OFF DURING COVID. I HAD SO MANY THINGS TO DO. IT WAS REALLY HARD TO KIND OF MAKE SURE THAT I TOOK CARE OF ME.

>>Andy Choi: RIGHT.

>>Kathy Grillo: JUST TAKE CARE OF YOU BECAUSE IT CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THRIVING AND SUFFERING.

>>Andy Choi: YEAH.

AND THAT OWNERSHIP, ESPECIALLY DURING THIS TIME, IS SO IMPORTANT. SO HOPEFULLY THAT MESSAGE RESONATES. AND OF COURSE BREAST CANCER, CERTAINLY NOT JUST AN ISSUE EXCLUSIVE TO WOMEN, OF COURSE, AND WE'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT NOW TO SHARE THE STORY OF V-TEAMER NEIL BREITENBACH FROM OUR ENTERPRISE TEAM AS NEIL REVEALS NOT JUST HIS CHALLENGES, BUT ALL THE WAYS HE FINDS STRENGTH IN THIS JOURNEY. CHECK IT OUT.

>> MY NAME IS NEIL BREITENBACH. I LIVE IN TAMPA, FLORIDA.

I'VE BEEN A VERIZON EMPLOYEE FOR A LITTLE OVER EIGHT YEARS.

I STARTED IN CAR RACING ABOUT 25 YEARS AGO, AND RACED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY.

THEN ABOUT THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO, I DISCOVERED CARTING AND IT REALLY SNOWBALLED FROM THERE, YOU KNOW, I STARTED COMPETING IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS, AND EVENTUALLY MOVED UP TO NATIONAL EVENTS. GOING TO BE COMPETING OVER IN IRELAND FOR A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP.

I WAS ORIGINALLY DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER 12 YEARS AGO, BACK IN 2009. IT CAME AS A SURPRISE, AS ANY MAN'S REACTION WOULD BE, IS THAT, YOU KNOW, IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO GET BREAST CANCER, AND IT REALLY ALL STARTED WITH NORMAL ACTIVITY, SUCH AS PUTTING ON SEAT BELTS IN CARS AND JUST HAVING A GENERAL FEELING OF DISCOMFORT IN MY CHEST. AND, YOU KNOW, WAS EVENTUALLY DIAGNOSED WITH STAGE 3 BREAST CANCER.

AND THEN ABOUT FIVE YEARS IN TO MY CANCER JOURNEY, WE NOTICED SOME PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE THROUGH NORMAL SCANS, AND I WAS MOVED TO A STAGE 4 METASTATIC BREAST CANCER DISEASE, AND WENT ON VARYING TREATMENTS OVER A PERIOD OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS. AND RECENTLY, THE CANCER HAS METASTASIZED TO, AGAIN, OTHER PARTS OF MY BODY THAT ARE A LITTLE BIT MORE DIFFICULT TO TREAT.

AND I'M CURRENTLY UNDERGOING CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS. I FEEL GOOD. I'VE GOT A GREAT MEDICAL TEAM. I CAN'T THANK MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES ENOUGH FOR IS JUST THE TREMENDOUS SUPPORT STRUCTURE THAT THEY'VE PROVIDED TO ME THROUGHOUT THIS JOURNEY. YOU KNOW, THE VERIZON COMMUNITY WAS JUST OUTSTANDING. MY MESSAGE IS, TRY TO BE AWARE AND PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR BODY, ESPECIALLY WITH MEN, WHERE WE TEND TO MAYBE IGNORE THINGS WE THINK ARE SMALL PROBLEMS.

IT'S CRITICAL IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT TO SEEK

MEDICAL ATTENTION AND MAKE SURE THAT IT'S NOTHING MAJOR.

YOU FOCUS ON POSITIVE THINGS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND STAY INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTIVITIES, WORK, CAREER, WHATEVER YOU LIKE TO DO.

I THINK THAT'S THE WAY TO GET THROUGH THIS, OR ANY CHALLENGE YOU MIGHT BE FACING, IS TO FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE AND NEVER GIVE UP.

>>Andy Choi: A BIG THANK YOU TO NEIL BREITENBACH FOR SHARING HIS JOURNEY WITH US.A BIG THANKS TO OUR PRODUCER, JESS BERNARDI FOR SHARING THAT STORY.WE KNOW FROM JESS THAT NEIL CONTINUES TO FIGHT, AND WE WISH HIM AND HIS FAMILY ALL THE BEST MOVING FORWARD. KATHY, THERE WERE MOMENTS IN THAT STORY WHERE NEIL SPEAKS ABOUT FINDING PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU CAN LEAN ON. AND I KNOW THAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU'VE DONE IN YOUR JOURNEY OF YOURS, AND I KNOW THE LINE BETWEEN LEADING A TEAM AND LEANING ON A TEAM CAN BE A TOUGH LINE TO NAVIGATE IN THE WAKE OF SUCH A PERSONAL CHALLENGE. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT LEADERSHIP FROM THIS JOURNEY?

>>Kathy Grillo: YEAH, IT'S SUCH A GOOD QUESTION, BECAUSE I DECIDED AT -- PRETTY MUCH AT THE BEGINNING THAT, YOU KNOW, I WAS GOING TO BE OUT ON LEAVE FOR A LONG TIME. SO I KNEW I HAD TO BE CLEAR AND HONEST AND TRANSPARENT WITH PEOPLE AS TO WHY.YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T JUST DISAPPEAR FOR 12 WEEKS AND NOT EXPLAIN IT. BUT I ALSO WANTED TO BE VERY HONEST ABOUT WHAT I WAS GOING THROUGH, AND TO REALLY SHARE VULNERABLY AND AUTHENTICALLY WITH THE TEAM, BECAUSE IN MY VIEW AND MY EXPERIENCE, THAT'S REALLY WHAT BUILDS TRUST AND CONNECTION WITH PEOPLE ACROSS THE BOARD, BUT CERTAINLY PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH YOU, BESIDE YOU, FOR YOU, AND SO I DID THAT, AND I GOT THIS OUTPOURING OF LOVE AND SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY

FROM MY OWN ORGANIZATION. I MEAN, PEOPLE SENT ME BAKED GOODS, AND I GOT LETTERS, YOU KNOW, LIKE ON LINES, YOU KNOW, PAPER WITH LINES AND PENS.

>>Andy Choi: HANDWRITTEN!

>>Kathy Grillo: YOU KNOW, PEOPLE

Still do this kind of stuff, and IT WAS GREAT, AND IT WAS BEAUTIFUL, AND JUST THAT KIND OF SUPPORT THAT I FELT.

I FELT LIKE BROUGHT US TOGETHER AS AN ORGANIZATION REALLY WELL. AND I THINK IT REALLY JUST PUT A CODA ON MY LEADERSHIP STYLE, WHICH IS I HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR PEOPLE, AND I THINK I HOLD THEM TO THAT HIGH STANDARD. BUT I HAVE A LOT OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM, TOO.

I REALLY CARE ABOUT THEIR WELL-BEING. I CARE ABOUT THEIR PROGRESS AT WORK AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT. AND WHEN YOU PUT THOSE TWO THINGS TOGETHER, YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE LOYAL, ENGAGED, EXCITED, HIGH-PERFORMING PEOPLE.

AND I WILL SAY THE PUBLIC POLICY TEAM IS ALL OF THOSE THINGS.

WE HAVE A LOT OF, YOU KNOW, TOUGH OBJECTIVES THIS YEAR, BUT EVERYBODY IS HITTING ON ALL CYLINDERS, AND I WAS SO GRATEFUL FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

SO I SHOULD SAY THANK YOU TO EVERYBODY THERE TODAY.

AND I HAVE TO ALSO MENTION MY BOSS.

>>Andy Choi: YES.

CRAIG!

YES!

>>Kathy Grillo: SO HE WAS JUST A ROCK FOR ME THE WHOLE TIME.

HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE I TOLD WHEN I GOT DIAGNOSED.

AND HE ACTUALLY ENCOURAGED ME TO TAKE MORE TIME THAN I EVEN THOUGHT I WOULD NEED WHEN I WENT ON LEAVE.

AND THAT REALLY GAVE ME THE PERMISSION AND THE SPACE TO

REALLY TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, TO DO WHAT I NEEDED TO DO TO GET HEALTHY AND TO GET BETTER, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE SURGERY. AND IT REALLY, YOU KNOW, SENT A SIGNAL TO EVERYBODY IN THE ORGANIZATION, AND CERTAINLY IN THE COMPANY THAT THIS IS HOW WE TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE WHEN THEY STRUGGLE.

>>Andy Choi: YEAH.

>>Kathy Grillo: THEY HAVE TIMES WHEN THEY HAVE TO CHECK OUT.

>>Andy Choi: YOU KNOW, AND WE'VE OBVIOUSLY SPOKEN TO CRAIG ABOUT A NUMBER OF THINGS, BUT, YOU KNOW, AT THE BACKBONE OF IT ALL IS THIS PERMISSION TO BE OPEN AND HONEST.AND BE VULNERABLE.

>>Kathy Grillo: YEP.

>>Andy Choi: YOU KNOW, GIVE

YOURSELF PERMISSION TO BE VULNERABLE.KATHY, THANK YOU.

AND, YOU KNOW, IT'S JUST -- WE'RE JUST SO HAPPY THAT YOU'RE HERE AND SHARING THIS STORY WITH US. AND SO AS WE BRING OUR CONVERSATION TO A CLOSE, WE DO HAVE A QUICK REMINDER.

TODAY MARKS THE START OF OUR BOLD HOMECOMING CELEBRATION IN SUPPORT OF STUDENTS AND ALUMNI FROM HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, HBCs.A KEY COMPONENT OF OUR RACIAL AND SOCIAL ACTION PLAN, VERIZON HAS EXPANDED OUR PARTNERSHIPS TO INCLUDE 11 HBCU's AS A WAY TO ATTRACT AND ENGAGE TOP TALENT FROM THESE STORIED INSTITUTIONS. CHECK OUT VZWEB FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN THIS WEEK-LONG VIRTUAL TAILGATE AND JOIN IN ON THE HOMECOMING FUN.

SO KATHY, AS WE START TO WRAP UP HERE, FIRST OF ALL, THANK YOU.

I KNOW IT TAKES A LOT OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO SHARE A STORY SO PERSONAL, AND I KNOW THAT AMONG OUR V-TEAM, WHETHER IT'S THIS PARTICULAR TOPIC OR SOMETHING ELSE, WE ALL HAVE OUR BATTLES.WE ALL HAVE THOSE QUESTIONS IN OUR HEADS ABOUT HOW DO WE NOT ONLY BATTLE, BUT MAKE PEACE.AND ALSO, GIVE STRENGTH



TO OTHERS.YOUR THOUGHTS AS WE CLOSE FROM YOUR JOURNEY?

THANK YOU, AGAIN.

>>Kathy Grillo: WELL, I

APPRECIATE THAT.BECAUSE I HAVE TO SAY THIS WAS -- FELT KIND OF HEALING FOR ME, TOO. IT'S KIND OF LIKE THE END OF MY PROCESS, SO I HAD MY LAST SURGERY IN JULY, AND I'M FEELING GREAT, AND SO THIS IS A REALLY NICE WAY FOR ME TO KIND OF SAY I'M DONE.AND I DID IT.AND I FEEL GREAT.AND ALSO TO THANK EVERYBODY AT VERIZON FOR ALL THE SUPPORT AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT.I LOVE WORKING HERE.I'VE BEEN HERE FOR 19 YEARS.

I HAVE MY 20TH ANNIVERSARY IN JUNE, AND I'M APPROACHING IT WITH EXCITEMENT AND JUST HAPPY TO BE HERE AND CONTINUE.

>>Andy Choi: YEAH.

AND THE MESSAGE FOR FOLKS WHO MAY BE THINKING ABOUT BREAST CANCER ON A PERSONAL LEVEL OR With their loved ones, what's the message?

>>Kathy Grillo: YEAH, I MEAN,

IT'S SCARY.AND IT'S SCARY TO THINK ABOUT GETTING YOUR TESTS. IT'S SCARY TO THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU WHEN YOU GET IT, BUT, YOU KNOW, THERE'S SO MANY RESOURCES. THERE ARE GREAT DOCTORS.THERE'S ALL THE SUPPORT THAT YOU HAVE HERE AT VERIZON, OUR HEALTH INSURANCE IS VERY GOOD AND, YOU KNOW, YOU CAN GET THROUGH IT. SO JUST GET YOUR TESTS. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE. YOU KNOW, PREVENTION IS KEY, AND WE'RE HERE FOR YOU IF YOU NEED US.

>>Andy Choi: THANK YOU.

AND THE FEELING IS MUTUAL.WE ARE ALL, THIS ENTIRE V-TEAM.

>>Kathy Grillo: GOOD TO SEE YOU,

TOO, IN PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWO YEARS.

>>Andy Choi: YEAH. IT'S WONDERFUL.

>>Kathy Grillo: WE SAT ACROSS

EACH OTHER FROM MARCH RIGHT BEFORE --

>>Andy Choi: THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC WAS C BAND AND NOT TALKING ABOUT IT.SO THIS IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT SUBJECT, BUT IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE YOU.

>>Kathy Grillo: THANK YOU.

>>Andy Choi: AND EVEN MORE SPECIAL GIVEN THE TOPIC AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD THESE DAYS.SO KATHY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH. A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VIEWERS, OF COURSE.SO HOPE YOU HAVE A GREAT WEEK.THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR STARTING YOUR WEEK WITH US, AND UNTIL NEXT TIME, YOU'RE UP TO SPEED.