24 July 2025

Being unable to hear well is a very frustrating experience. The voice of experience just spoke.

I know that the ability to hear is diminished as part of the aging process; the impairment is hastened along by working in the vicinity of jet engines, as on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier. Sound attenuators were required, but the piercing high pitched scream of jet engines penetrated the best attenuators, and the net effect was deterioration of one's hearing capacity. My hearing has been poor for several years and for about the last twenty years I have been using hearing aids. The ones I am now using cost $4,600, came with a four year warranty, and free maintenance. For about three and a half years, they served me well, but now either my hearing has taken an additional downturn or my hearing aids are nearing the end of their usefulness, because I have great difficulty hearing what folks are saying. I want to remedy the situation and I have a solution in mind, but I have put that on a back burner until I get more pressing issues taken care of.

By more pressing, I refer to my heart. The aortic valve has been under observation for more than a year, closer to two years, actually. It isn't like the flat head V-8 engine where one just pulls the heads and grinds the valves. The cardiologist says we need to replace the valve. Because the valve is integral to the heart, located internally, not many years ago the situation was irreversible, but that is no longer the case, and the wheels have been put in motion to replace my aortic valve. I pen this manuscript on Sunday evening because my usual time for putting it on the wires is Monday morning, and Monday morning I will be taking the first step in the preliminary requirements for getting the job done. The second step will be taken Thursday, and after that, I will go with whatever unfolds. The cardiologist that I consulted on 17 July said his nurse would call me and advise me of how and when to proceed. Thus far I have heard nothing from a nurse, but two of the four (maybe five) preliminary steps are now scheduled and I believe I will soon be advised of what is coming next. The time frame for valve replacement has not been discussed, but based on the rapidity with which the preliminary stuff is being scheduled I have to believe it will not be very far into the future that I get a new valve.

I have been advised that the procedure is minimally invasive, requiring only a brief hospital stay, and that total recovery is pretty fast. In days of yore, the valve replacement would have required opening up the chest cavity, but the latest technology has the new valve being installed via the femoral artery. The only surgery is a small incision to gain access to that artery, and from there all goes rather quickly – something like an hour, according to the literature that was provided to me. Am I concerned?

Only mildly, and that is more about the scheduling rather than the procedure. I hearken back to Psalm 91, the one that says God commands His angels to guard me in all my ways, and I have no fear of the outcome. With that kind of power looking out for me, of what should I be afraid? All will be well, of that I am totally confident, and I look forward to regaining my former energy level soon afterward.

Back to the hearing problems – once the valve job is in my wake, I will be taking steps to upgrade my hearing aids. I have in mind a new, improved modern day marvel that is supposed to work wonders. If it does not, I have forty five days in which I can return them for a full refund. Believe me, I am totally fed up with being able to hear a speaker, but not understand more than a word or two of what is being said. When the speaker says something and the room erupts in laughter and I have no idea why, it is more than high time to get something going right. I just this Sunday attended a retirement party where I could hear voices and occasionally everybody laughed – everybody but me, because I had no idea what was said.

Last Saturday I was getting into my truck and a lady got out of her car and motioned to me to come over, which I did. There was another lady who was telling me something about how she knows me, probably even told me her name, but it was all lost on these faulty ear drums. By leaning close and listening

carefully, I ascertained that they were mother and daughter, the daughter is fifty two, and that she lived in Phoenix for a time. The daughter looks like someone I probably saw locally, but it would really be nice to know who she is and how she comes to know who I am. Loss of hearing is a real bummer, and I will be taking steps to regain at least some of what I have lost.

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