

## Talking Points from **SICK GIRL** By Amy Silverstein

In an interview, Amy Silverstein can discuss:

- The complex dance of patient-doctor communication—evasive white-coat white lies, flat-out lies, and frank discussions, alike;
- The terrible price paid for dumbing herself down, the miscalculation of risk, and how smart, savvy patients create themselves;
- Living as a sick person, always on the edge of a medical emergency that she hides from her young son and friends, and often, even her husband;
- How patients think—about physicians as “friends,” or not, a tremendously intimate relationship with limits;
- The list of Intentions she wrote to herself: *I will not be like other transplant patients; I will not live scared, I will never take Scott for granted*...and those she was able to keep;
- Not in the eye of the beholder—how she hid her scar, her “flaw,” for years before learning to accept it, and how we perceive beauty and our “ugly body parts”;
- Medicine as a best guess, not an exacting science;
- What well-meaning medical psychologists do not know, and need to know, about patients;
- Organ transplant winners and losers and the mind-bending delicate balance between being sick enough to receive what you need in order to live and living long enough to receive what you’ve been waiting for;
- Everybody has a scar—the lessons she learned as a young woman about the many ways people struggle to overcome setbacks and loss, and go forward;
- How heart transplant waiting lists are made and managed (Amy is on the Board of the United Network for Organ Sharing, the federal contractor that makes and enforces all regulations regarding organ donation and procurement); what it really takes to live the “miracle” post-transplant; the truth about the efficacy of heart transplants; and what it means to outlive transplant life expectancy—when you reach the point where longevity is commended by a doctor saying, “We’re in uncharted waters but I’m happy to navigate them with you.”