

PREVIEW_ David Unwin - Interview (Breckenridge 2017) 1

Dr. Unwin: Five years ago I was thinking of retiring. I was disappointed in myself I think, because it didn't feel I was making a difference. I was thinking about why had I become a doctor. And when I was young I wanted to be a doctor to make a difference to people and I had an idea I'd make a big difference and they would be grateful and it would be wonderful.

But as the years went by it felt that maybe I let the patients down, because I was measuring things all the time and sometimes I didn't even care that much about the things I've measured. And then I felt I was just giving them drugs and then they got a bit more poorly say hypertension or something, then I gave them more drugs...

And it wasn't fulfilling because I didn't feel I was really making a difference. Because I didn't see people who really looked better. Obviously sometimes maybe they had a chest infection or something and then they were much better, but many of the chronic diseases, they didn't look any better. They just seemed to deteriorate slowly and it sounds a bit disappointed. So I was coming to retirement and I thought, "I'll do something else."

And then I particularly remember... I am a runner... my wife and I we're doing a run together and you think really well when you run. I said to my wife, "I think it's probably time I finish now pretty soon." She said, "Don't talk like that." I said, "I am not sure I have achieved as much as I'd hoped."

She said, "Why don't we do one last thing? Why don't we do one thing together? "Something that has nothing to do with making money, nothing to do with targets or anything measured or something that other people have made you do. Why don't we do something that we really believe in that would benefit patients?"

And she's a clever one and she said, "Let's do something hard. So what are the hardest group of people that you feel worst about?" I said, "I think it's the overweight type 2 diabetics."