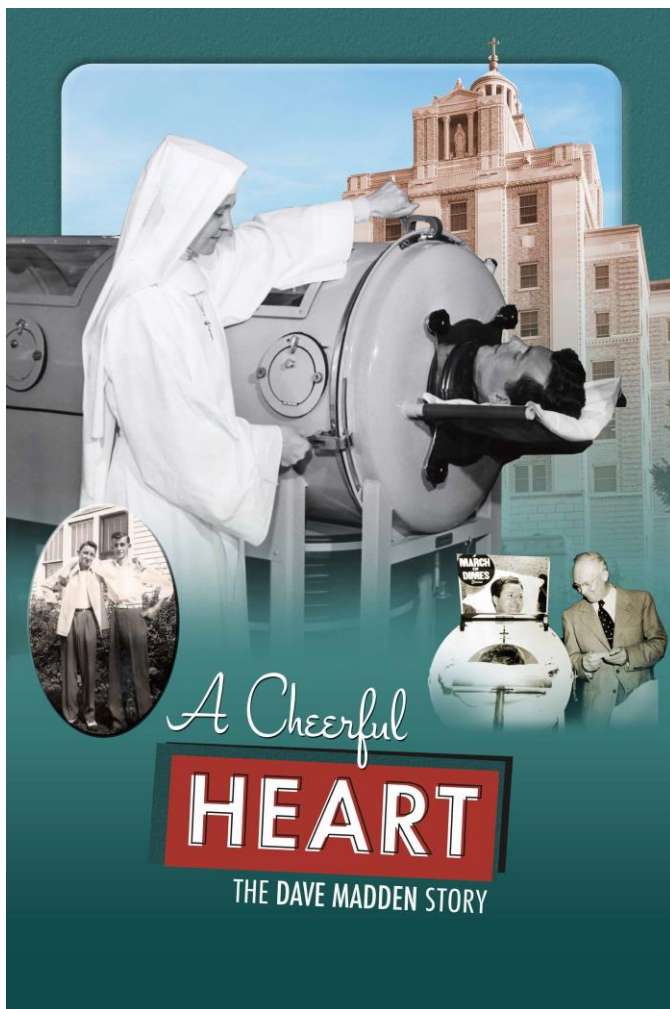




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

A Cheerful Heart: The Dave Madden Story



On a summer day in 1948, Dave Madden became the latest casualty of the polio epidemic sweeping the nation. Paralyzed from the neck down, he was taken to Saint Marys Hospital at Mayo Clinic, where he remained in an iron lung for the next 16 years. The poliovirus permanently damaged Dave's body, but his joy for life was untouched. His positive outlook inspired his fellow patients and won him many friends. Famous entertainers and athletes, politicians and royalty all dropped by Dave's room for a visit. He ran a TV rental business from his iron lung and appeared on the *Today Show*.

This docudrama tells the story of how this immensely likeable, unforgettable man met the challenge of his illness with courage, faith and "a cheerful heart."

Discussion Questions

1. Many people said of Dave Madden, "I've never known anyone like him." What qualities made him so remarkable?
2. Sister Mary Brigh Cassidy said Dave Madden had "the gift of acceptance." How is acceptance a gift? How have you experienced the need to accept a difficult situation?
3. Why did Dr. Earl Elkins refuse to describe any patient's case as "hopeless"? Why is hope such an important quality in life?
4. Why do you think Dave was bothered by well-meant expressions of pity?
5. Who has inspired you by having a brave approach to adversity?
6. How would you help someone cope with an accident or illness that permanently changed some aspect of his or her life?
7. What do you think it means to have "a cheerful heart"?