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**Exclusive**

**KATHY  
BATES**

THE SECRETS TO  
HER HEALTH &  
HAPPINESS

>hint hint<

# Embrace Change



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# Welcome, Change

FROM CANCER TO CAREER TWISTS AND TURNS, ACTRESS KATHY BATES EMBRACES LIFE'S CHALLENGES WHOLEHEARTEDLY. *By Nicole Pajer*



Visit [Parade.com/Bates](http://Parade.com/Bates) to find out what's still on the Oscar winner's bucket list.

**K**athy Bates knows how to roll with the punches. In the last 14 years, she has beat both ovarian cancer and breast cancer. And, after a long and lauded career in film, the 69-year-old actress has shifted her focus to TV, starring in four seasons of FX's *American Horror Story* and playing actress Joan Blondell in FX's *Feud*. Next, she'll star as Ruth, the owner of a California cannabis dispensary, in Netflix's comedy *Disjointed*, out Aug. 25.

An ongoing challenge for Bates is lymphedema, a blockage in the lymphatic system often triggered by removing lymph nodes during breast cancer surgery. The chronic condition causes excessive swelling in the arms and legs and affects 10 million Americans, "yet nobody really knows what it is," says Bates. She's now a spokesperson for the Lymphatic Education & Research Network (LE&RN). *Spry Living* caught up with Bates to talk about lymphedema, her newfound niche in TV and ditching the prosthetics after a double mastectomy.

**Cancer and its aftermath changed my outlook in a profound way.** I've become less of a hermit and I travel more. I really enjoy every moment of my life now. It's not that every moment is terrific—we all go through tough times—but I try to be more present and grateful for the good times that I have.

**I realized that I had to get back in shape.** I started walking more. I've lost around 55 pounds. Just being physically free of that extra weight has been liberating and has helped keep the [lymphedema] swelling down. I avoid salt and alcohol, too, because of lymphedema.

**I've recently decided to "go flat."**

I read that more and more women are doing that, and finally I came to the conclusion, "I don't have breasts anymore, why do I have to pretend like I do?" I have prosthetics and I can put them on for a character, but in my own



Bates as Joan Blondell and Catherine Zeta-Jones as Olivia de Havilland on FX's *Feud*

life I wear Spanx tanks under my shirts and I feel much more comfortable with that than having to strap on a bra with these fake boobs in them. That has given me a lot of freedom and confidence and I just feel better.

**TV has rejuvenated my career.** I've gotten to really push my envelope. Oftentimes, I'm cast as the sort of dumpy dishrag mother or best friend part, so to be able to play someone like [the twisted New Orleans socialite in *American Horror Story*] Madame Delphine LaLaurie, it's a panoply of opportunities for an actor. And now I'm getting to do a sitcom with *Disjointed*. People will see a side of me they haven't seen before.

**My two Yorkies are at the very center of my well-being and happiness.** My favorite part of every day is when I get to come home and cuddle with them. Their philosophy is: it's always a good time to take a nap. Wise creatures.

**I recently bought an electric guitar.** I used to play guitar years ago. It brought me a lot of pleasure when I was a teenager growing up and was having tough times. Now that I'm navigating the waters of being older and going through some tough times adjusting to that, I decided I'd like to get back to what gave me joy. ●