

EMPOWER

Cancer Survival, A Bootcamp

Has your world recently been shaken by the diagnosis of cancer? Are you having trouble focusing your mind, both around the steps you need to do with your cancer diagnosis, as well as trying to maintain a normal life? Are you alone in your feelings of desperation, confusion, and need to regain control of everything?

Most people upon hearing the fact that they now have cancer suddenly feel as though their life has been turned upside down, inside out, and that the speed of events has now approached mach 1, and there is no longer any sense of control available. This is often described as the occurring at the worst time in their lives, either due to financial concerns or other issues, such as work or family matters.

No one plans to get sick and very few plan financially on getting sick. Suddenly with the new diagnosis of cancer, many new expenditures begin to come into view, and the thoughts of needing time away from work rise up out of the darkness.

Also, we all know of others who experienced cancer did not do so well. Illness compromised the lives of these people to such an extent that they were no longer functional. Costs of medical care soared and came rushing in so fast that no time was available for strategizing what to do next.

I say slow down for just a moment, and take a breathe or two.

HELP is Available

I know what is happening to you. I know what is about to happen in your lives. And I know there is a way you can do better, you can do well.

I am a physician practicing in Montana (Relax, you won't have to come to Montana, unless you want to visit.) I am boarded in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, and Medical Acupuncture. I have practiced medicine, including cancer care for over thirty years. I have worked with many just like you in my cancer clinics and with many at week long retreats, teaching, coaching, and helping those to develop successful strategies in dealing with cancer.

My training has been excellent. My medical degree is from Texas Tech University School of Medicine with internal medicine residency from Mt. Sinai in Milwaukee and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center. The medical oncology training was at M.D.

Anderson Hospital in Houston, Tx. In addition, I have worked with such greats as Dr. O. Carl Simonton, and cancer centers in Houston, Chicago and Montana.

Your Journey

Do you have many things going on now? Multiple doctor visits lined up? Confusion about treatment options, or lack of options? Is there a concern about family dynamics while you are undergoing treatments?

Do you have the best team available to help with your care? Doctors? Who else do you need to help you?

Are the nights in bed long and full of thoughts which actually scare you?

You do have options, and many good options. I am one of those good options. Let me help you get through this. I am not here to replace your medical team, your support system. I am simply here to help compliment who is already helping. I am here to show you how to best utilize those who are helping you. I am here help you develop **successful strategies** to get through these challenges.

Come join the **Cancer Survival Bootcamp** and begin today with it's program to **EMPOWER** you through this challenge.

EMPOWER

E - Eliminate the unknowns, the darkness, the fears

M - Meet me where you are and let me help you today!

P - Purify (or alchemy) turn your fears and anxieties into emotions which are beneficial to good health.

O - Organize your medical team and your support team into the best with improved communications and performance from each member.

W -Weave through the medical path with ease and confidence knowing what the terrain is that you will be traversing.

E - Empower yourself, strengthening you inner physician (inner guide).

R - Resurrect out of the ashes a new you, the Phoenix rising!

ELIMINATE

None of us are taught how to go through the cancer illness. We never learn in school, or from our family members just what is required to deal with this challenge. Most of us never think that this illness will strike us, so we never prepare emotionally or financially for this.

So with this lack of preparedness comes many anxieties and fears associated with the diagnosis. The most common fear of people with cancer is, "I am going to die from this, no matter what I do!" Even those with simple skin cancers fear this upon hearing the diagnosis.

As this fear persists and ruminates in the subconscious, many symptoms begin to develop which in turn aggravate that fear. Pains begin to surface. Sleep disappears. Fatigue and depression creeps into the lives of those with cancer. These problems then begin to cause stress in the interpersonal relationships. Communication breaks down between family members. Needs of everyone then begins to suffer. Life begins to spiral out of control.

It has been said that much of what we fear is simply in the head. This is so true. Learning to change fears into more healthful emotions can and will make big differences in the quality of life. Changing these fears allows to the body to leave the stress state where hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol dominate. In turn, more vitality is experienced, as well as an improved immune system. This is critical for those undergoing cancer therapies.

Activities which help relieve stress include physical exercise, good nutrition, meditation, and cognitive therapy modalities. In the cancer program, one will learn simple techniques which can in a matter of minutes help dissolve the obtrusive fears.

With control and elimination of fears, anxiety levels then will drop allowing a more peaceful coexistence and improved energy levels, as well as an improved sense of well being. Calmness then can return, both to the individual and to the family environment. Rational thoughts will resume allowing correct decisions to be made. Restoration of strained family relationships can occur.

ORGANIZE

In the typical medical model, a patient is referred to a medical oncologist, radiation therapist, and/or surgeon upon the the diagnosis of cancer, or suspected diagnosis of cancer. The patient then follows the directives of that specialist. Oftentimes these cancer professionals, as are many of today's physicians, are very busy. As a result, little time dedicated to helping that person with cancer understand some of the most fundamental aspects of their health care. Attention is shifted from one of education to one of doing, doing the treatments.

Today, few patients learn of why it takes so long to begin treatment for the cancer once the diagnosis is known. The patient s ignorant as to the necessary staging evaluation

that must be done prior to treatment commencement. The decision to treat is then a big mystery, as the almost every patient knows someone with cancer who received chemotherapy and others who had either surgery or radiation. To the uninformed, such variations in treatment leads to confusion about proper care and in itself results in increased anxiety and fears.

Within the cancer program, the individual will come to understand how to best develop his treatment team. He or she will learn the roles of the possible members and how to best interact with them.

Also, the development of the absolutely best support team is carried out. The person with the cancer will then learn how to best utilize these people and how to protect them from burn out which can be disastrous if it occurs at a critical time, say late at night.

WEAVE

When I began my career in oncology, things seemed much simpler. Recently, the major cancer clinics are hiring what is called "Patient Navigators". These are individuals who will lead the patient with cancer through the maze of the clinics and cancer care. The Navigators will help the patient to coordinate their care with the various physicians and to coordinate their lab/x-ray testing and x-ray studies.

As I've stated before, my purpose is not to replace your doctor and nurse with this program, but rather augment those two showing you how to better interact with the doctors and nurses you encounter which in turn will improve your communications and help with getting the desired results of both the doctors and nurse, as well as helping you to get your needed results.

This weaving will be you learning the purpose behind most (I am reluctant to say "all") activities in your cancer care. It will help you to anticipate upcoming events through your education of the process. This will in turn help to reduce new anxieties. You will be able to plan your life more easily with less interruptions.

EMPOWER

Albert Schweitzer said that each of us has an inner physician who knows what it is we are to do. This "inner physician" goes by many different names, often relating back to a religious or spiritual aspect unique to each individual.

I give my patients a simple introduction to their inner physician with the idea relating to most of them being a parent. There are many times in a parent's life while dealing with their children when they (parent) confronts a crisis moment in relationship to their child. Often, we parents are not quite sure what to do in that particular crisis moment, but in the majority of the time, I believe we choose the best option. This is one example of that inner physician (or inner parent) speaking to us and telling us what must be done.

I dare say women listen to this more than men do. I have no explanation as to why this is true.

We come to know our inner physician when we slow down. This is one of the values of meditation. Often solutions come to us when we are in a meditative state, particularly when we are searching for an answer.

This slowing down can come from periods of meditation. It, also, comes from simply taking a walk and being quite, or while sitting watching a fire burn or the ocean waves come in. With practice, it can come as quickly as sitting at a stop light while in traffic.

This contact and conversing with this inner physician is likened to that of strengthening of a muscle. The more it is done, the more effective and less effort is required to get the same, or better, results.

Begin to trust this inner physician on little things and as time marches on and as you become more familiar to the voice of the inner physician, trust it with bigger roles.

RESURRECT

Resurrect is a strong word! I use it intentionally at this time.

Cancer is a life changing event. Many with cancer mention that they only want their lives to return to the way it was before the diagnosis. Your life will never return to how it was before the diagnosis. I can promise you.

Life will change! You decide how it changes. It can change in a manner where you become that person you have always desired to be. You can be powerful in your emotions and thoughts. You can be calm in face of adversity and trials. Your life can have a purpose and direction. All of this can come out of the cancer diagnosis. I have seen it over and over and over.

Or your life can change to one of helplessness, hopelessness, and without purpose, pleasure, or love. You can fall back into the same predicaments which plague you before your diagnosis. I have seen that occur over and over.

The difference in the two paths is where the person who is diagnosed as to having cancer answers the wake up call and decides to make some serious changes in his/her life. More than any one time in most lives, at the time of diagnosis and for a period after, the person who has the diagnosis of cancer has the permission to make major changes in his or her life. The permission to change comes from family members, work relationships, friends, and from within. I know of no other period in life where one has the consent from so many to change.

Now taking the choice to change, can cause the permission to be revoked by some as the change begins to take place. Be ready for this, and know your response, or desired

outcome. You may begin to exert more independence, and family members may not like this preferring that they remain in a more controlling fashion. Workers may not be so appreciative of the changes if the changes cause them to take on more work because you have decided to stop covering for the co-workers, or because you have decided to take more personal time to enjoy your run through life.

You will discover the person you want to become. This understanding may not be complete by the time you finish your therapy, or finish my program. It will come if you have laid down the framework for it. And it can be modified as time moves on. You will not be locked in on a "person to become" at any one time. Our roles in life and goals can and do change with time.

So, come join me for the journey of your life. Let's together develop the successful strategies to deal with cancer and life.

RoyHallMD

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