



Empowered!

My journey - My choices

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in collaboration with Caring Ambassadors

WHEN THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT OF YOUR WORLD...

My story...



In April 2011, when I was 39 years old, I received an injury that left me needing both an attorney and a chest x-ray. One week later, I had signed divorce papers and found out I had lung cancer.

ARE YOU EFFING KIDDING ME?!?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?!?

I don't know how anybody can hear "you have cancer" without feeling like it deserves a string of expletives. Let's face it -- no matter what stage of life you're in, there is never a good time to hear those 3 words. So, let yourself have some time to deal with it. Cry, wail, scream, hop up and down, punch your pillow, blame yourself, sob, blame everybody else, rail against the universe, attempt to write your obituary, and/or whatever else you need to do.

At some point, though, you are going to have to face it.

It's time to make some choices.

You have to do SOMETHING -- even if it's choosing to do nothing.

It really helped ME to define my priorities and my options first. This was easy for me -- my 2 boys were my first priority. That made my choice clear to me. I was going to fight like crazy so I could raise them. (It was mildly tempting to choose 'drink myself to death', but that wasn't really the legacy I wanted to leave behind.) It really helps me to keep my sons in the forefront of my mind when I think about my cancer.

What drives YOUR decision? Assuming you made the choice to fight, WHO or WHAT are you fighting for? I've had other patients tell me all kinds of reasons they are motivated to fight -- and everyone is different. Often it is about family -- whether it's a partner, children, grandchildren, and sometimes pets. I've heard from some that it's the work they do that inspires them. Another person said they just 'aren't ready' to be done living. They still want to go sky-diving, Rocky Mountain climbing, and 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fu Man Chu. (Okay, it was actually Tim McGraw that said that, but you never know... that might be some peoples' reasons.)

So, if you're with me... it's time to put your 'brave boots' on. In the next few pages, I am going to share with you what got ME this far and how I became an "empowered" patient.

**Just know, though, that it is up to you.
This is YOUR cancer journey
and YOU are in charge of what happens next.**

**Everything can be taken from a man but one thing:
the last of human freedoms -
to choose one's attitude
in any given set of circumstances,
to choose one's own way.**

- Viktor E. Frankl -



This has always been one of
my most favorite inspirational quotes.
I used this concept to make some
affirmations for myself.

I accept that I can't change that I have cancer. This is not in my control.

There are SO many things that ARE in my control, though.

Maybe it won't be the magic cure, but it will make the ride
sooooo much better!

I CAN
DO
THIS!!!



**You know what's funny?
The more I said it to myself,
the more I believed it!!!**

What do you think? Is there a quote or a saying
or something you've written that inspires YOU?
What do you think about making your own affirmation/s?



Here are some of the other choices I made & things that helped empower me to be not just a survivor, but a sur-THRIVE-er!

- **I chose an oncologist who specializes in my type of cancer & got second opinions.**
If available, a doctor that has your cancer as a specialty ensures that your treatment is consistent with the newest research and treatment protocols.
- **I established a working relationship of mutual trust, respect, and clear communication.**
Empowered patients recognize that their doctor is just a person, too -- kindness counts.
Empowered patients use their appointment time wisely. They arrive prepared with any questions or feedback and follow physician and prescription directions. They ask questions when they don't understand something or need explanations.
- **I became an active partner in my own care.**
Empowered patients insist on a biopsy or testing on their tumor for biomarkers that can determine treatment. They are invested in knowing their treatment options and are a partner in the decision-making process. They make sure they clearly understand the expected benefits and potential side effects of all options.
- **I became my own best advocate.**
A positive working relationship with your oncologist does not change the fact they likely have patient loads in the hundreds, if not thousands. An empowered patient has just ONE -- themselves. They don't hesitate to ask for copies of their reports, get second opinions, or seek out further information.

- **I realized that caregivers are heroes, too.**

Having supportive people along with you through cancer makes a difference that is indescribable. Let them in. Soak up their support and offers to help. Learn and practice saying “yes” and experience the power of love and community. Caregivers truly teach us that no one fights alone.

- **I explored the world of palliative care.**

Palliative care focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms and stress of cancer. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. Empowered patients use these services to focus on feeling as well as possible.

- **I realized the importance of good mental/emotional health.**

An empowered patient understands that the cancer journey includes challenging and emotional times. They recognize there are many strategies for maintaining good mental and emotional health and seek the best option for them.

- **I sought balance.**

An empowered patient learns to fuel their body healthfully, while recognizing that participating fully in social activities and family celebration may have more health benefits than avoiding nightshade vegetables. An empowered patient stays as active as they are able, understands that treatment takes a toll on their body, and allows time for rest and relaxation. Sleep is healing!



I'm still in the fight, but it's different now.

I don't worry anymore
about not being here to raise my boys.
I have cancer, but cancer can't have me!

The research is happening so fast
and new treatments are being developed.

I believe and have hope
that this will be chronic disease for me,
not a terminal one.



check out my
brave girl boots!!





Empowered patients know that having hope is a choice they can make.
Hope is the belief that a positive outcome is ahead.

And let it be clear – hope is not denial.

It is educated optimism, and empowered patients know there has never been a time in the world of cancer treatment where having hope is so warranted.

Hope can inspire you to action,
including being a stronger advocate for yourself and others.

Hope is contagious --

when you have the spirit of hope guiding you through this journey,
you may find that it affects the whole world you live in,
your relationships with others, your dreams,
and your goals and wishes for the future.

Spiritual Work

Nutrition

eat more veggies!

avoid processed foods

buy organic when I can

cut/reduce sugar

vitamins/supplements?

★ make appt with naturopath - get list of recommended vits/supp - check with doctor that it's ok w/ meds

friday night services - make appt with Rabbi?

she is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.
- proverbs 31:25 -

Exercise

get referral for pulmonary rehab

yoga? See if i can go with julie?

can i borrow a dog to take for a walk?

check out the new gym in town

focus on building strength

Well-Being

do my affirmations

work on saying 'yes'

remember it's ok to say no

sleep is healing!!

check in with counselor?

make appointment with social worker at clinic

My PLAN WORKSHEET

Support System



too many to list!!

Western Medicine

love my new doctor!

take meds on schedule

read the caring ambassadors pub med reviews

STAY INFORMED!!

bring list of questions from between appts

My Journey, My Choices

Stress Management

ACUPUNCTURE!!

spend extra time with boys

time with the soul sisters

dance party!

CALL MOM!

Complementary & Alternative Medicine

pulmonary rehab

naturopath

visit?

learn more about meditation

Write down the Choices that Make Your Plan:
websites, names & numbers, inspirations, etc.

MUSIC IS POWERFUL

Sometimes you need to listen to pump you up, or to sing along in the car,
and sometimes you just need to grab your partner, kids, caregiver, cats,
whoever -- and *dance your pants off!*



These are some of my favorites!!!

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

- Marvin Gaye & Tami Terrell -

Best Day of My Life

- American Authors -

Dog Days are Over

- Florence and the Machine -

Down

- Jay Sean -

Eye of the Tiger

- Survivor -

Roar

- Katy Perry -

Say Hey (I Love You)

- Michael Franti & the Spearheads -

Shake it Off

- Taylor Swift -

Stronger

- Kelly Clarkson -

The Fighter

- Gym Class Heroes -

On Top of the World

- Imagine Dragons -

Fight Song

- Rachel Platten -

F**k You

(or clean version Forget You)

- Cee Lo Green -

Happy

- Pharrell Williams -

I Will Survive

- Gloria Gaynor -

Joy to the World

- Three Dog Night -

The Gambler

- Kenny Rogers -

Tubthumpin'

- Chumbawamba -

Whip it

- Devo -

You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet

- Bachmann Turner Overdrive -

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What would be on YOUR
pump-it-up playlist?

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WORDS ARE POWERFUL

Research has shown that using positive self-talk reduces stress and depression, improves coping skills, and may even effect health outcomes. What **is** positive self-talk? It's the voice in our head that narrates throughout our day. It's like an inner sports announcer!

All the emotions of a cancer diagnosis can make it difficult to keep our self-talk positive. Consider the possibilities of writing yourself a note of affirmation and posting it somewhere where you'll see it often, or your favorite inspiring quote on your mirror, or explore your creative side to create art for your home. The more you see or experience these words, the easier it is to keep your self-talk positive.

The next few pages are images that you are welcome to download and print to get you started. Ultimately, though, you should have something that is meaningful to YOU.

A note from the author:

Thank you for your consideration of this material... and I hope that sharing what I have learned will be of some use to you. I would love to hear *your* stories of empowerment!

Feel free to contact me through Caring Ambassadors.

Remember:

This is YOUR cancer journey and YOU are in charge of what happens next. YOU can do it!!!

Jessica Steinberg, M.S.





We Can Do It!
BEAT LUNG CANCER



don't let go.



**CANCER MAY HAVE STARTED THE FIGHT,
BUT I'M GOING TO FINISH IT.**



Cancer is so limited...

IT CANNOT CRIPPLE LOVE

IT CANNOT SHATTER HOPE

IT CANNOT CORRODE FAITH

IT CANNOT DESTROY PEACE

IT CANNOT KILL FRIENDSHIP

IT CANNOT SUPPRESS MEMORIES

IT CANNOT SILENCE COURAGE

IT CANNOT INVADE THE SOUL

IT CANNOT STEAL ETERNAL LIFE

It cannot conquer the spirit.