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The Beginner's Guide to

# Mapping Your Cancer Journey

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Where am I Going? Where Do I Start? How Do I Get There

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

Introduction

5

Chapter 1
The Cancer Journey

9

Chapter 2 Building Allies

Or a Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy

11

Chapter3
Where Do I Start

13

Resources for the Cancer Journey

# Introduction









# Introduction

"To live will be an awfully big adventure."

— J.M. Barrie, Peter Pan

Living as a cancer survivor is an awfully big adventure! Once you cross the threshold, you will not emerge the same. To say it is transformative is putting it mildly. It is filled with challenges for sure.

One of the greatest challenges is access information about cancer, treatment options, and support services. Not that it doesn't exist – it's everywhere. Everyone has an opinion, cure, treatment, approach to cancer. Finding information could be a full time job.

This guide serves as a primer to sites and services that could potentially take some of the stress from you. It represents one step in developing allies and moving from panic to powerful.

The guide starts with an explanation of the Cancer Journey and the need to develop allies. The remainder of the guide are lists of resources on the internet that you can use to navigate your journey. Though it is not exhaustive, it will get you started.

With that said, I want to add that I take no responsibility for any claims made regarding the approaches to cancer treatment or cures. Your decision to follow any one particular path is solely of your own design. Please use caution in making any decision regarding your health. Always check with your primary care provider. I have also included information on reading research papers. You would do well to review these practices prior to trying to self diagnose or treat yourself.

# Chapter One

# The Cancer Journey







# The Cancer Journey

"Begin at the beginning," the King said, very gravely,
"and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

I don't know about you, but when I got my cancer diagnosis, I was dumbfounded. Hard to believe, but I was lost for words. My only thoughts were – "WTF?". My first words to my oncologist were – "I don't have time for this! I have a half marathon in Hawaii in June. I've already bought the ticket. It's my 60th birthday. Do something. Make it go away!"

I belong to an HMO. Their practice is to be self-contained and provide all the support you need within the confines of their practices. Given that, I was told about a support group, lead to the company nutritionist and other wise informed of the treatment options. In my zombie state, I proceeded as told by my doctors.

I completed all their tests, went through chemo and radiation with flying colors, and then it stopped. It was rather eerie. I mean one day you are surrounded by practitioners and the next you find yourself standing alone. I looked to my practitioner for advice and counsel. Though I could feel the empathy, there was nothing he could do. "Make healthy choices. Stay Strong." Another "WTF" moment – no real follow-up plan, no after care. Just try to make it to the 5 year mark. Expect an annual visit. I was left to my own devices.

I've learned a lot about my cancer and my cancer journey since that day two years ago. I know that there are many folk like me that found themselves sitting around like kitchen help waiting for the cancer bell to ring. With the advances in cancer treatments, more people are surviving. What we are finding is that no one planned for the success of treatment – survivorship. Surviving doesn't mean it won't come back. It doesn't mean there aren't scares. It doesn't mean life as usual.

# The Cancer Journey

There is a path we all traverse when diagnosed with cancer. It is a defined journey with road marks and challenges along the way. How we choose to travel the road is very personal. But we all must make that journey. It is not an easy path, but it can result in great transformation. A picture of the roadmap can be found on the following page. Here are the major phases of the journey:

- 1. Innocence we all begin in a state of innocence. This is marked by a sense that all is well with the world.
- 2. The Call something disrupts the familiar patterns and challenges you to be put to the test. Usually a cancer diagnosis.
- 3. Initiation you accept the call, the journey is under way. You enter the phase of the bottomless pit. This is where the magic happens. Treatment begins.
- 4. Allies You receive assistance from allies on the journey. It is the point of surrender that allies appear: when you realize that you can not compete the journey alone. Allies are not always human. It can be a shift in your perspective, a deeper relationship with the divine.
- 5. Breakthrough/Transformation Allies provide the way for successful resolution and completion of the task. A new level of understanding is reached, a sense of "Aha! This is it!"
- 6. Transformation/Re-Entry The journey ends with your return to a "new normal" life. You have a new awareness.

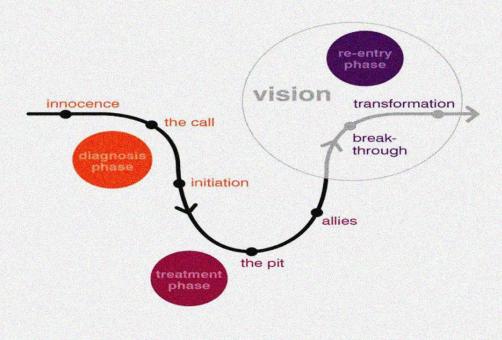
The journey is not a simple one time trip. Depending upon your circumstance, you can cycle through the Initiation -Allies phases numerous times. Ha is key is that there are defined actions that must be completed to reach transformation and they begin with finding allies.







### **The Cancer Journey Roadmap**



The Cancer Journey - All Rights Reserved

5



http://www.thecancerjourney.com/



"You have plenty of courage, I am sure," answered Oz. "All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty."

– L. Frank Baum, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

# Chapter Two

# **Building Allies**

Or a Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy







# Building Allies or a Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy

If Life is a bowl of cherries, What am'l doing in the pits?
-Ermma Brombeck

When writing your ebook content, focus on staying succinct, not verbose. Your readers saw a headline that captured their attention. Simply use the content inside your ebook to provide the information you promised in your title.

Bullets can help structure your content. Here are some additional tips for creating eBooks:

- Incorporate Visuals: Screenshots, photos, graphics, and other visuals can help further illustrate your core points.
- Add Links: Link to other tools or resources that can help your reader. For example, we have 160 free business-themed stock photos that may help you with visuals: <a href="http://bitly.com/1aWz5]4">http://bitly.com/1aWz5]4</a>
- **Proof Content**: Even if you have no editor in your department, find someone who would be willing to read your content and proof it for basic grammar and spelling.

# Chapter Three

# Where Do I Start

Finding Strength For the Journey







# Where Do I Start

"If we walk far enough," says Dorothy, "we shall sometime come to someplace." — L. Frank Baum, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

#### You've just been diagnosed. Now what?

#### **Get Organized**

Unfortunately, cancer does not exist in a vacuum and can't be relegated to after-hours. The life you had when diagnosed needs to be addressed, most likely changed.

#### **Manage Treatment Side Effects**

Cancer can drain you physically and mentally, but there are ways to bolster your inner reserves.

#### **Share the News**

One of the biggest challenges people with cancer face is sharing their diagnosis with their family, friends and employers.

#### Create an Action Plan

Having a plan can help restore your sense of control and leave you with more energy to cope with the rest of the process.

#### Find support services in your local area.

- Contact your area cancer organization or hospital and speaking with a patient services representative.
- Search online using keywords and the name of your community. For example, search for "food banks, Austin, TX."
- Check the listings in the government or business sections of your local telephone directory.
- Talk with a helping professional such as a social worker or a representative from the Department of Health and Human Services in your area.
- Call the United Way 2-1-1 telephone helpline (www.211.org) is available in many areas. This helpline provides free and confidential information and referral with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling resources and more.
- Contact government agencies such as the National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

# Chapter Four

# Resources for the Cancer Journey

# Resources to the Cancer Journey

#### **American Association for Cancer research**

How to read research papers

http://www.aacr.org/ADVOCACYPOLICY/SURVIVORPATIENTADVOCACY/PAGES/TOOLS-FOR-UNDERSTANDING-SCIENTIFIC-JOURNAL-ARTICLES---PAGE-1 DF8968.ASPX#.VpaEFhUrL3k

#### Additional resources on reading research papers

http://violentmetaphors.com/2013/08/25/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-2/ http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/what-is-cancer/understanding-statistics-in-cancer-research

http://ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/HowtoReadaResearchTable.html

#### **List of National and International Cancer Organizations**

http://www.cancerindex.org/clinks7.htm

#### **NCI Organization**

As the nation's leading federal agency for cancer research, NCI has 30 divisions, offices, and centers who work together to build, maintain, and enhance a cohesive and comprehensive cancer research agenda. Their work ranges from cutting-edge research on cancer causes, treatment, and prevention; to training the next generation of cancer researchers; to funding and supporting the nation's vast network of scientists and cancer research institutions; to informing and educating the American public and the world about cancer. The NIH Office of Management Assessment maintains the official NCI organization chart.

http://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/organizatio

#### **General Cancer Groups**

This list offers organizations that offer support and services for people with any type of cancer. To view groups classified by specific disease type, view Cancer.Net's Cancer-Specific Resources list. http://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/finding-support-and-information/general-cancer-groups

#### **National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center**

The National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center (The Survivorship Center) is a collaboration between the American Cancer Society and the George Washington University Cancer Institute funded by a 5-year cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its goal is to shape the future of cancer survivorship care and improve the quality of life of cancer survivors as they transition from treatment to recovery. Here you will find information about the progress The Survivorship Center has made and resources that have been developed for cancer survivors, health care professionals, and the policy and advocacy community. Check back often, because the information and resource sections will continue to grow.

 $\frac{http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorshipduringandaftertreatment/nationalcancersurvivorshipre}{sourcecenter/index}$ 

# Resources - cont'd

#### WHILE WE HOPE FOR THE CURE... WE MUST FOCUS ON THE CARE™

NCCS's mission is to advocate for quality cancer care for all people touched by cancer. Founded by and for cancer survivors, NCCS created the widely accepted definition of survivorship and defines someone as a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis and for the balance of life.

http://www.canceradvocacy.org/

#### **National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center**

The National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center's mission is to improve the quality of life of cancer survivors and caregivers and reduce death and disability due to cancer by focusing on the importance of improving functioning and helping survivors achieve optimal health and well-being.

https://smhs.gwu.edu/gwci/survivorship/ncsrc

#### **Center for Disease Control**

People are living longer after a cancer diagnosis. Cancer survivors often face physical, emotional, social, and financial challenges as a result of their diagnosis and treatment. As the number of cancer survivors grows, CDC is working with partner organizations to help survivors, along with the people in their lives, throughout their cancer experience. http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/survivorship/

#### **How to Start Your Cancer Research**

How to Find Cancer Resources

More Nonprofit Cancer Organizations and Government Resources

- American Cancer Society
- Cancer.Net
- Cancer Support Community
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Need help finding support services?

View more than 100 organizations nationwide that provide emotional, practical, and financial support services for people with cancer and their families.

http://supportorgs.cancer.gov/home.aspx

#### **Get Matched with a Cancer Survivor**

Cancer Hope Network matches cancer patients or family members with trained volunteer cancer-survivors who themselves, have undergone and recovered from a similar cancer experience.

http://cancerhopenetwork.org/index.php?page=getmatched&gclid=Cj0KEQiAiNi0BRDaobaq 3dKJhrwBEiQAyVThzTdm2KZTKvmoOQ4\_DDCNMF0ffv31wN-OAIM76AO9Z3kaAgNw8P8HAQ

# Resources - cont'd

#### **Cancer Financial Support**

Financial Support for those living with Cancer can be hard to come by. With you in mind, we have developed a program whereby you can borrow the money you need secured solely by your life insurance policy. You will never be required to make loan payments or incur any out-of-pocket expenses. Our loan is repaid by your life insurance policy's death benefit and the remaining proceeds go to your family.

http://apply.lifecreditcompany.com/

The American Cancer Society has programs and services to help people with cancer and their loved and ones understand cancer, manage their lives through treatment and recovery, and find the emotional support they need. And best of all, our help is free.

http://www.cancer.org/treatment/supportprogramsservices/index

CancerCare provides free, professional support services for people who have completed cancer treatment, as well as post-treatment and survivorship information and additional resources. <a href="http://www.cancercare.org/tagged/post-treatment\_survivorship">http://www.cancercare.org/tagged/post-treatment\_survivorship</a>

The Financial Support section provides links to resources that offer financial assistance for those dealing with cancer. Medical bills, medications, legal issues, travel and accommodation costs for treatment and education and employment issues can create financial hardships. The following resources will help in lightening the financial burden of life with cancer. <a href="http://managecancer.org/resources/financial-support.aspx">http://managecancer.org/resources/financial-support.aspx</a>

#### **Cancer and Careers**

http://www.cancerandcareers.org/en

#### **Communication and Cancer**

http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/areas/pcc/communication/pcc monograph.pdf

http://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/talking-with-family-and-friends

http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/adjusting-to-cancer/communication-pdq

#### **Cancer and Nutrition**

5 Great Cookbooks for Cancer Patients
Proper Nutrition and Easy Meals to Make During Cancer Treatment
<a href="http://cancer.about.com/od/foodguide">http://cancer.about.com/od/foodguide</a>

#### 41 cancer - fighting foods for your grocery list

Want to add prevention to your kitchen? Take this list to your next grocery visit, and stock up on these cancer-fighting ingredients. And remember to make fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains the biggest part of every meal.

https://www.mdanderson.org/patient-and-cancer-information/cancer-infor

# Resources - cont'd

#### **Holistic Approaches to Fighting Cancer**

http://www.cancerfightingstrategies.com/

http://www.foodmatters.tv/articles-1/healing-cancer-naturally-a-holistic-approach

http://www.naturalnews.com/022636\_cancer\_healing\_body.ht ml

http://www.goodhealthinfo.net/cancer/holistic\_approach\_cancer.htm

http://www.utopiawellness.com/services/alternative-cancer/?gclid=CPa9h9Oxp8oCFUNffgod\_koHzg

http://www.nhwellnesscenters.com/treatmentprograms/cancer-therapy/

http://www.cancercenter.com/treatments/naturopathic-medicine/

http://www.webmd.com/cancer/features/holistic-cancersupport-and-care

# Join my Email List

Learn the techniques to transform from panic to powerful. Develop your own arsenal of allies for your journey.

For a free consultation on your personal cancer journey, call or email.



Finding Strength For the Journey 707-304-30679 terimcclanahan@terimcclanahan.net