

Am the Captain of My Soul – Creating a Team for the Treatment of Cancer

Cancer is one of the most feared diseases and it is often a shock when an individual hears that they have cancer. The first step in the journey as a practitioner is to support and listen to the individual. Then provide an easily understandable explanation of the meaning of the pathology report. This includes the type and extent of the cancer. Staging describes the tumor size, extent of spread to lymph nodes and the presence of metastasis.

As a naturopathic physician and primary care provider, I consider education and support as an essential part of my role in this healing journey. Once an individual understands the condition and options available, then s/he can begin to assemble her healthcare team. There are many ways of treating cancer and it is often the case that a patient chooses an oncologist, surgeon, naturopathic oncologist, and primary care provider. The time period prior to acute treatment is a time when I see most individuals learning as much as they can about cancer from their physicians, friends, family, and the Internet. This is



All's Well
Health for Body, Mind, Spirit

by Moira Fitzpatrick, PhD, ND

the time of greatest fear. Moving through the emotional process to acceptance of the disease empowers the individual to create a plan of action.

I see an integrative approach to the treatment of cancer as one which embraces both conventional medicine and complementary support. There are many ways to support an individual going through active treatment, whether that is surgery, chemotherapy or radiation. Pre-surgery often includes an anti-inflammatory diet, a good quality multivitamin and mineral, vitamin C, probiotics, increased water intake and elimination of alcohol, caffeine

and sugar. I often recommend homeopathic arnica to limit tissue trauma. Individualized plans can be designed to help individuals cope with the side effects of chemotherapy. Different side effects occur with different chemotherapy agents. It is essential to know drug nutrient/botanical interactions and which nutrients and botanicals will maximize the chemotherapy and post treatment recovery. When an individual is undergoing radiation, naturopathic support is available to support the immune system, maintain energy levels and protect the skin from severe burning without interfering with the

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efficacy of radiation. The success of maximum support occurs when all members of the team are communicating and focused on the best quality of care for the patient.

When conventional cancer treatment is completed, it is a time to celebrate getting through both the emotional and physical stress on the body. It is the time

when the individual can look at her life and discover a new balance. Healing cancer is an integrative and ongoing process. The cause of cancer appears to be a complex interaction of genetics, epigenetics, lifestyle, the environment and patterns of emotional response. The most familiar interaction with the environment is cigarette smoking and lung cancer, low dietary fiber and colon cancer, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and various cancer. In the realm of genetics, there is an increased lifetime risk for women developing breast cancer if they have an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, tumor suppressor gene mutations to name a few. Contributing factors associated with cancers can include blood sugar dysregulation, inflammation, oxidative stress, excess calories, radiation. More than 50% of cancers have a nutritional component in etiology according to a study done by the American Institute for Cancer Research in 2009. Genomic

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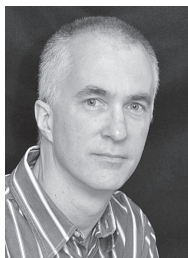
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Creating a Cancer Team

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Testing for SNPs, single nucleotide polymorphisms or variations in DNA coding that tell us how we metabolize and detoxify medications, environmental toxins and possibly stress. Personality characteristics associated with cancer include over caregiving, feeling burdened with responsibility, and carrying deep resentment about not being appreciated. Another characteristic pattern is being overly independent, lack of control, having difficulty being vulnerable, and needing to move forward with a plan to get through each stage of cancer. This often masks an underlying anxiety and insecurity.

How can I optimize my vitality and health? The first step is to check in on your current experience. Are you fatigued, dealing with hormonal changes, adapting to the changes from conventional treatment, struggling with emotional

issues? Now may be a time to look at the various factors in your life that contributed to the cancer. These may include (to name a few): genetics, alcohol consumption, dietary factors, environmental exposure, stress, and ways of coping emotionally that exclude good self-care.

The foundation of all treatment is an anti-inflammatory diet and regular consistent exercise, which could be as simple as walking 60 minutes daily. An anti-inflammatory diet is high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy protein such as fish and plant based proteins, plus quality fats including seeds, nuts, avocados and oils: olive, flax, and walnut. Additionally, it is important to individualize nutrition. For example in lung cancer, it is important to avoid beta-carotene in supplements, and increase carotenoids in foods such as carrots, squash, green leafy vegetables, tomatoes.

Individual testing for inflammatory markers, SNPs, nutrient deficiencies and food sensitivities help to direct individual treatment. Mind/body treatment provides a means to identify underlying beliefs and issues in a person's life and clear the emotions fueling the thoughts. Visualization provides a way to decrease anxiety and tension, making room for relaxation and inner peace. Connecting with spirit and embracing life in the moment brings us to our heart. The journey through cancer is a champion's trek. It is a deep surrender to the soul.

Moira Fitzpatrick is a naturopathic physician and licensed clinical psychologist, who practices in the Northgate area of Seattle. She is a primary care provider, specializes in the unique health concerns of women, practices functional holistic medicine and is an ETT practitioner. Dr. Fitzpatrick can be reached at (206) 525-5576, www.themeraldcenter.com.

Shine Your Own Light

By Dena Marie

Having a strong intuition is like having a light that shines through the darkness. It can show you the way, but it can also blind other people if not used wisely. I feel that learning how to shine this light properly did not come to me overnight, but over a lifetime of learning.

As a child, I sensed that I was a bit different. I intuitively knew things I shouldn't have known about family, friends and occasionally strangers. One memory I have was at a family reunion. I remember asking my aunt if she felt sad. I told her that I saw her crying in a dream. In fact, she had been depressed after knee surgery. However, she was slightly upset with me because she didn't want anyone to know about her sadness.

Years later at a house warming, I mentioned a buzzing sensation I was feeling in my hands. It was so intense for me that I kept on saying "can't you feel it?" Everyone there exploded with laughter and made comments, saying I was crazy. Later in the evening, the owner of the house told me that they had built over a Native American burial ground. He didn't want anyone to know, so I kept silent. These and many other events caused me to spend years keeping my mouth shut about these bits of insight. As time went by, I would only speak about my insights when I was

pushed and prodded.

When I began to meditate daily, my intuition grew stronger, but I had learned to use a bit more discernment when it came to voicing my hunches to friends and family. I was about to also learn that having insights about other people may not do you any good if you think you can change the outcome. For example, I was told one afternoon after meditating that my father would die soon if he did not quit smoking. My intuition told me to warn him and then let it go. So, I made the phone call and found the courage to tell him.

After I delivered the message, I let it go just like I was told to do. He did not listen to the warning, and continued to smoke. A few years later, he got a common cold and his lungs were too weak for him to combat it. At the early age of fifty, he passed away.

I also remember a time when my grandmother came through to me, after she had passed over. She asked me to tell my mother to let go of the anger that was eating her up inside. Again, it took some time and courage, but I finally gave my mother the message. I thought that she would appreciate the experience I had, but my mother has been angry at me ever since. You can't live anyone's life but your own, and we've all come here to learn our own lessons. I have even warned my

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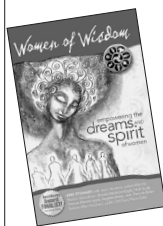
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