Celebrating My Second Re-Birthday

15 Lessons Learned on Surviving and Thriving after a Bone Marrow Transplant

May 22, 2024

Nancy Fichtman Dana, PhD
Professor, University of Florida
Celebrating My 2nd Re-Birthday

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2nd Birthday

ABOUT ME
Mantle Cell Lymphoma

- 4 Rounds of In-Patient Chemo (R-Hyper CVAD)
- Autologous Bone Marrow Transplant
15 Lessons Divided Into Three Categories

- Preparing for transplant
- Experiencing Transplant
- Living After Transplant
Preparing For Transplant
Lesson #1

Reach out and ask for what you need.
Lesson #2
Develop a long-term communication plan.
Lesson #3
Take care of your caregiver.

Michelle Bishop, Ph.D.
Clinical and Health Psychologist
Lesson #4
Condition mentally and physically.
Lesson #5
Tap into music and other creative arts.
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Tap into music and other creative arts.

Gearing Up For the Transplant, and A New Theme Song
Journal Entry by Nancy Dana – June 18, 2022

Hi Everyone -

Since stem cell collection on June 6th, I’ve been gearing up for the next phase of treatment which will start this Tuesday, June 21st, with the

I’ve spent the days since collection preparing physically and mentally for this next phase. I feel STRONG and READY, but also just a little bit scared for this most intense part of my treatment plan ahead. If you’d like, this coming Tuesday, please help me feel brave by playing the song "Brave" sung by Sara Bareilles. While the verse lyrics don't fit, the simple refrain certainly does: "I just wanna see you be brave!"
Lesson #6

Write!

Dear Sponge,

Thank you so much for the hard, hard work you have been doing! I am grateful to you. I am writing to let you know that support and appreciation will be on its way to you tomorrow! I know how much you will appreciate this, and I appreciate you continuing to work as hard as you do. Those nasty white-knuckled calls a lesson! They have absolutely no business in our study, and working together, we are going to crush them like little cucumbers.

With love and great thanks for your support,

Honey
Lesson #6

Write!
Experiencing Transplant
Lesson #7
Embrace your new look.
Lesson #8
Decorate your hospital room.
Lesson #9
Establish and try to keep a daily routine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td>Wake up – Today</td>
<td>12:00 pm Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show until</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>breakfast is</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>delivered</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>1:30 pm Nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Shower and get</td>
<td>3:00 pm Laps/Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dressed</td>
<td>Bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Laps around BMT</td>
<td>4:00 pm Husband visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/read/color/journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson #10
Mark time / milestones.
Thank you for all of your love, support, thoughts and prayers during this past challenging year for us. We are looking forward to saying good-bye to 2022 and extending a warm welcome to a happy and healthy new year. Wishing you love, joy, and peace in 2023!

With Love and Gratitude,
Nancy and Tom
Lesson #11
Be kind, gentle, and patient with yourself.
Lesson #12
Read if you are able and when you are ready.

BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS
SULEIKA JAOUAD

SIX YEARS AND COUNTING
Love, Leukemia, and the Long Road Onward
PETER GORDON

PICKING UP THE PIECES
Moving Forward After Surviving Cancer
SHERRI MAGEE, PH.D. and KATHY SCALZO, M.S.O.D.

WILD HOPE
DONNA ASHWORTH

Healing Words to Find Light on Dark Days
Beautiful and uplifting
DAVINA MCCALL
And I rumble along in my mental kitchen, making tea, emptying the dishwasher. And my sad sits there and just exists, without judgement or acrimony. Just acceptance.

I know she is many things you see, other than just sad. She is love, she is grief. She is fear, she is weariness and worry, and really, she puts up with rather a lot in this life.

So I give her a cup for tea. And listen to her sorrows, until she’s ready to go back outside again.

Sometimes I wake up and sad has already let herself in.

But I don’t scold her for that.

And really, she deserves a warm place, every now and again, this world gives her much to bear.

Sometimes, I wake up sad.

For no reason.

And that’s okay.

P.S: when sad is visiting, I look like exactly the same. You would never know I’m hosting her…unless you ask.
Lesson #12a
Be curious about, and explore, all feelings.
Lesson #13
Create a healing plan.

Nancy’s Healing Plan

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living The Questions</th>
<th>Intention(s)</th>
<th>Action and Behaviors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In what ways can I assure the amount and intensity of my work life does not interfere with appreciating and living a life of wholeness and meaning beyond work post-cancer?</td>
<td>Relax my achievement orientation&lt;br&gt;Relax my perfectionism tendencies</td>
<td>• Say no to work tasks that are not absolutely necessary to assure a gradual return to responsibilities and figure out what a reasonable work load will be for me post-cancer&lt;br&gt;• Surface and confront old patterns of thought that will not serve me well now (I’m not good enough; I’m not doing enough; What will people think?; My worth is tied to achievements at work)&lt;br&gt;• Explore ways to reinforce that I am worthy of taking care of myself and...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Lesson #13
Create a healing plan.

My Questions

In what ways can I assure the amount and intensity of my work life does not interfere with appreciating and living a life of wholeness and meaning beyond work post-cancer?

What are some strategies for living life wholly and meaningfully post-cancer to make the most of the time I have left?

How do I give back to my body in gratitude for all it has endured throughout cancer treatment?

In what ways can I develop a sense of inner-peace post cancer?

How can I use my cancer for good?
Lesson #14
Expect bumps in the recovery road.
Lesson #15
Believe in yourself and lean into life.

“Cancer is life.”
Believe in yourself and lean into life.

"Cancer is life."
Cancer is just a part of life.
Thank you!

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https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/nancydana
Questions?

Nancy Fichtman Dana, PhD
Professor, University of Florida
Let Us Know How We Can Help You

Visit our website: bmtinfonet.org

Email us: help@bmtinfonet.org

Phone: 888-597-7674 or 847-433-3313

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