

Survivorship: A Roadmap for Managing Fear

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Associations to Cancer

- No hair
- Chemotherapy
- Weakness
- Sickness
- Vulnerability
- Death

Cancer Changes Everything

- The World
- Your Loved Ones
- Yourself
- Your Security

The World

- Why did I get cancer?
- Why me?
- What do I do wrong?
- Am I being punished?
- Do you think that bad things don't happen to good people?

Your Loved Ones

- Have they been there for you or not?
- Do they know what you need?

Yourself

- Do you blame yourself for your illness?
- Do you feel strong or vulnerable?
- Do you want the most aggressive treatments or the least?
- Are you angry or serene?
- Do you want help?
- Is it easy to ask for help?

Changes in Security

- Cancer Bursts a bubble of denial
- Something really could happen now!
- Makes it hard to find meaning in things you used to.
- Without felt security, enjoyment of everything changes.

Fear of Recurrence

- There are no full guarantees about the future
- There is always that chance that the cancer could come back
- Literature estimates that at least 75% of survivors worry about recurrence
- Many worry each day
- Can lead to a vicious cycle

Common Triggers

- Scans
- Minor illness or ache or pain
- Hearing about someone who is diagnosed
- Comparing scenarios with others
- Hearing about a death from cancer
- Reading obituaries

Things You Can Do

- Use your worry effectively
- Get control of your worry
- List of things that you have done
- List of things you have control of in your life

How to Manage Your Emotions

- What are your own personal associations?
- Being honest and real about the feelings you are having, even if they are painful or scary.
- What is living meaningfully to you?

Community

- Connecting with others
- Connecting with other survivors (how this is different than connecting with others in your life)
- Support Groups
- Commonality of feeling, and the ease that comes from this

When You Need Additional Help

- Symptoms to look out for

Write a Letter

- Dear Cancer,

My Contact Info

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