



Stems of Life

Picked from the Garden of Survival
How My Stem Cells Saved My Life

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Enjoy a part of my book

"Stems of Life Picked From the Garden of Survival"



Four

So She Tells Me

It was late January when I returned to see Dr. Neuhaus; I was feeling pretty chipper for a change. I still had all the symptoms, night sweats, fevers and the damn itching and burning sensation. But, I was confident that my surgeon would find the cause.

If she couldn't, she would find somebody who could. So, no wonder I felt pretty good. I would be getting on with my life.

I walked down the hallway to my exam room. Dr. Neuhaus saw me, and said, "Where's your husband today?"

I told her that he was still at work, and that I am here alone today. "OK, I will be right there," she said. I settled in, figuring she would be a few minutes. The door quickly opened and Dr. Neuhaus smiled and we chitchatted a bit.

She went to the sink and started to wash her hands. She told me that she had the smears sent to another laboratory just to be certain of the findings. Then she said, you were right all along! You suspected Hodgkin's and that was correct; you do have Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer!"

I was stunned. My mouth opened and nothing came out. Then, all I said was, "Am I going to die?" Over and over I asked the question—couldn't seem to shut up!

Dr. Neuhaus, by this time, was next to me, holding on to me and telling me she didn't know!

We needed to go through the steps of finding where the cancer was located in my body—was it only under my arm, or had it spread? She said she was sorry that Reed was not there today, it would have been much easier for her to tell him than for me to do it. She gave me a printout of the pathology findings from the lab. The printout stated they found the “Reed Sternberg” cell that indicates Hodgkin's lymphoma had been found. She told me she would get the ball rolling and do everything possible for me.

So, now I had to tell Reed this damned awful news...



Telling Them

From the booth where I was seated in a quiet part of the Lyon's restaurant on Folsom Avenue, I could see Reed getting out of his car in the parking lot. In the gathering dusk; the trees were all silhouetted, with the glare of the parking-lot lights I could just make out our car and Reed's figure.

I was just sitting there, drinking coffee and waiting for him to arrive from work. He works in downtown Sacramento for the Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency as a housing specialist. We had planned to meet at Lyon's for dinner and to chat about my visit with Dr. Neuhaus.

As he approached the door of the restaurant, I felt myself growing tense, but I sat up straight and smiled. Reed; how should I describe him? We are in our late

50's, he is about five feet, ten inches tall and weighs 250 lbs., on a good day. Though he was getting a bit heavysset, to me he looked perfect.

His hair was just beginning to get a little gray. We were married in 1977, after we had met at a "Parents Without Partners" dance. We each had been married before, both in 1964, and each divorced in 1975. Pure coincidence!

Reed arrived at my booth, slides in across from me with a big "Hi Love," and a little bit of chitchat. I wasn't hearing his words very well, perhaps because my mind was somewhere else, or the protective smile I'd spread across my face had closed my ears.

I soften my smile and make a little conversation as I slide a card across to him. I had stopped at a drugstore in search of the perfect card, and yet I couldn't remember any of the printed words that came with it. I remember going into the drugstore and looking through the racks of cards.

I had stood there muttering to myself: "Is there a card that said anything like 'I'm sorry Honey, I have to tell you I have cancer!'" I had even laughed to cover up the tears that seemed ready to spill at the moment.

I remember going to the cash register and the cashier, in her very friendly manner, asked me if I found everything I needed. I am now laughing and crying at the same time. I certainly did not want to ask her to find the "Cancer" card; I could have emotionally pushed her over the edge with me. One of us was enough!

*Thank you for reading a part of my book,
If you enjoyed it, I would appreciate it if you would
purchase a copy for yourself or someone who needs a
guide through the ordeal of cancer treatment.*