

Cancer Answers

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Survivor OR "Victor"?

How many of you can identify with me when I say it was disconcerting to be called a survivor when I was at the beginning my cancer journey? After all, I had just been diagnosed with this disease. I certainly did not feel like a survivor - rather, I was trying to survive. The word "survivor" seemed like it was meant for someone who had already beat the disease., so I looked up what survive means. There are three very similar definitions for **survive** and each one relates to journeying through cancer.

1. To remain alive or in existence.
2. To carry on despite hardships or trauma; persevere
3. To cope with (a trauma or setback); persevere after

Well, yes I was still alive and I was carrying on despite my cancer diagnosis determined to cope with and persevere through the disease...so - I guess I was a survivor from the day I was diagnosed. The definition does describe what so many of us have experienced. This month I decided to list some survival tips for beating cancer, but...I must admit, the word "survivor" still bothers me some. It does not adequately describe what so many have experienced. The use of the word "survive" in our society often connotes that "you just made it...and nothing more". When asking someone going through a rough time how they are doing you might here "well, I am surviving". Sounds a bit defeated doesn't it?

Victor comes from the Latin word "vincere" and it refers to the winner of any contest, conflict or struggle. Instead of just coping with cancer, as one definition describes survive, we can choose to win over our cancer struggle emotionally, mentally and spiritually, even if we do not physically.

Having an attitude of acceptance is surviving. When anticipation is added to acceptance it becomes victory.

Your life will never be the same as it was before cancer. That can cause denial or anger or acceptance and anticipation. I am so thankful that my life is not the same as it was prior to cancer. I learned so much, became a stronger woman and my faith in God grew exponentially. None of us know what tomorrow, next year or ten years from now will be like for us - but we can live in anticipation of growth through, because of, and despite this cancer battle. We can be excited that because of our cancer journeys we can help and encourage others.

My prayer would be that the first definition of survive would be true of each and every person ever diagnosed with cancer: to remain alive or in existence. Alas, that is not the case. However, I believe that those who lose their lives to cancer are the ultimate VICTORS if they go to a heavenly world to be forever with God. We live in frail human bodies that will eventually die. If these bodies die of cancer, another disease, as the result of an accident or just old age, the truth remains that everyone that is born will die. Do you have the hope of eternity with God? If not please contact me or talk to someone who knows about the God of the Bible.

Survival Tips

The most important thing to remember is that it is almost always necessary to change one or more lifestyle habit following your cancer diagnosis. Your body has succumbed to this disease partially due to a compromised immune system. That means you need to strengthen and rebuild your immune system. Here are several simple ways to begin that process.

1. Drink enough pure water. The recommended number of ounces daily is found by dividing your body weight by 2.
2. Eat foods in forms that are close to their original form. Two examples of this are: eating a raw apple versus a piece of apple pie and, eating whole grain bread versus refined white bread fortified with preservatives. You will get the most nutrition from foods that are less processed.
3. Exercise daily. It is important to start where you are when considering what exercise(s) to do. If you were basically sedentary prior to cancer, you do not want to embark on a rigorous exercise program. Not only will you be likely to quit, your body will not respond well to adding this "foreign" activity to everything else it is dealing with.
4. Reduce your stress level wherever possible. Deep breathing is a wonderful way to destress. Breathe in to the count of 5 and slowly breathe out several times in succession daily. Make lists for things you need to do or want to do along with lists of your doctors, their contact information and other pertinent things. With less for your brain to focus on and remember, you will be able to de-stress and concentrate on the most important thing...being a VICTOR.

I talk a great deal about the stress your body, face and hair products can add in my book. Order a free pdf or a hard copy on my website.