

Cancer Answers

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Strong Relationships = Strength

It would be an insult for me to write this article on the preposition that none of you have strong relationships nor had strong relationships prior to beginning your cancer journey. I know for a fact that that is NOT the case. However, let me spend just a few minutes reminding all of us what makes these strong relationships so important and why - at this critical time in your lives, building more of these relationships can be emotionally life-saving. We are physical, spiritual, emotional and social. During times of crisis and illness the social part of us can be greatly impacted for many reasons. Perhaps the most obvious is the need to stay away from the hosts of germs that permeate social gatherings during treatment. Additionally, it has been my experience, that close friends whom you have had strong relationships with prior to cancer may find it difficult to know what to say and do to encourage you during this time and consequently pull away some. OR, you may find that YOU are beginning to pull away because it feels like you are being selfish that every conversation centers on you. A valid and important reason relationships may suffer is that you are putting all your effort into being pronounced cancer clean and in full remission. As imperative as this is - that leaves little time for nurturing the social part of you.

This afternoon I was outside enjoying a beautiful, warm September day in Colorado. As I walked through our backyard, played with our dog Sasha and pulled a few weeds I was warmed not only by the sun, but by hearing our neighbor's voices over the fence as they entertained guests. I was reminded that in the hubbub of life I have not spent as much time as I would like building and growing relationships with my friends and family. Our youngest son married a wonderful woman just last weekend and what a celebration of love it was! However, because they had a short engagement, the wedding was quite large, and our new daughter-in-laws family lives out of state - I did much of the wedding planning. My summer was consumed with this wedding. I am not equating my summer to your cancer journey, but there are some similarities particularly, in the case of being focused on one thing in your life to the exclusion of other parts of your life.

God created us as whole beings. If we focus too intently on any one part of our life the other parts suffer. While engaging the biggest fight of your life physically it is imperative that you do not allow the spiritual, emotional and social parts to atrophy. Physical, spiritual and emotional strength are intimately tied to the strength of our social lives.

Take a few moments this month to reflect on the social part of your life and write down a few people you would like to contact and/or see. Then beside that person's name write some specific things you can ask them about, such as what is going on in their lives currently - or things to reminisce about. Between now and the end of 2011 go down that list as you have the time and energy and stay connected, reconnect or begin connecting socially. Your body will thank you for it!

Friends and Family

This description of friendship is quite fitting for this month's newsletter.

"You may meet a person and instantly know that you will be best friends forever. Other friendships develop over an extended period of time. In some friendships you may feel a sense of equality, while in others there may be a clear sense that one is giving more to the friendship than the other. There are no rules about how a friendship has to be. If you are able to share your life with another human being, by all means go right ahead. All friendships are unique and special in their own way. Each one is valuable." source: family friend poems <http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/friend/specialfriend-poems.asp#ixzz1XgQXZHkv>

May I share my family with you as I close this month? Having watched the 10 year anniversary commemorating 9/11 today, I am reminded of how special family is.

My husband, **Chris**, and I have been married 39 years this October. He was my first and only love. We serve in the music ministry at our church. He is a very special man! **Craig**, our oldest son, and his wife, **Kari**, have been married two years and live in Chicago where he works for the largest advertising firm as a senior art designer. He is a fine artist at heart and has been able to show in many art shows around the world. Kari works as a marketing wizard for a local restaurateur. She is a beautiful gal who we love very much.

Casie and his wife, **Gracie**, were married last weekend! Casie has been in youth ministry here in the US and has done missionary work in Ghana West Africa for over a decade with a local orphanage and church. Gracie is a mechanical engineer working with the space program. Her beauty and sweet spirit are very precious to us. WE ARE TRULY BLESSED!