

Cancer Answers

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Learning New and Different Things

This is the last of the articles I am writing based on the article in January's newsletter of this year, titled "New Beginnings". We have spent nine months, including this month; looking at ways to change, or improve our lifestyles, but let me preface this month's article in the same way I did last month. That is: that it would be an insult for me to write this article on the preposition that none of you are learning new and different things while on your cancer journey. I want to applaud those of you who are actively increasing your knowledge on many and varied subjects AND encourage those of you who perhaps have felt like you just don't have the energy right now to begin taking baby steps toward gaining new knowledge.

My maternal grandmother lived to age ninety-nine and I will never forget something she said to me when she was in her late eighties or early nineties. She was a simple woman who never traveled out of the United States nor to many places here in the states. She subscribed to National Geographic and was an avid reader of that magazine and others. That day she told me that she had travelled the world through her National Geographic's. Her next statement was what impacted me the most. She told me that she had lived her life desiring to learn something new every day! I know that we are bombarded with information on all sides and that, like it or not, we are learning new things every day - but, I believe, making a conscious decision to learn something that will enrich and enliven our lives on a daily basis is a very valuable goal.

Often when you feel your worst is the best time to read, or watch a video about somewhere far, far away. We accomplish two things when we do this. First, it takes our mind off of how we feel, at least for an hour or two, and second, we use our minds to learn something new which keeps our brains healthy. Sounds like a no-brainer to me (pun intended)!

There is a BIG difference between seeing yourself as a person who has cancer (or any other disease or ailment) and seeing yourself as a sick person. When you see yourself as a sick person you can spiral downward into despair much more easily because you begin to base all of your decisions on an unstable foundation - an "I am sick" foundation.

Just as getting yourself dressed each morning; putting a bit of makeup on and combing your hair is like a medicine - so too is learning new things. Pull out those books, articles, magazines and pamphlets that you have kept because there were things in them you wanted to learn. Jot down some subjects that you find interesting and then spend some time on the computer researching them. I am constantly jotting down things that I want to check into when I watch movies, have conversations or am just driving along in the car and see a sign that sparks a desire to know more. Of course, we can't believe everything we find on the computer - but, if it gets you started researching and learning - wonderful! Start spending just a few minutes a day learning new things and your life will blossom from that knowledge.

Let's Start the Learning NOW!

Do you know what your name means? If you do - and I am certain quite a few of you do, have you contemplated lately how your name is a part of your life?

I have been teaching a study the past several weeks to the high school girls at our local church that is all about being beautiful young woman both inside and out and how that relates to posture, grooming, fashion and modesty and, of course, the Bible. Did you know that in biblical times the meaning of a person's name was as important as the name itself - if not more so? From the moment the child was old enough to comprehend the meaning of his/her name that meaning was what they heard each time their name was said. Imagine the powerful influence it had on their lives either for good or bad. Often a child was named for something that happened during the birth, so if the birth went well the name might be something like Hannah (favor/grace) or Abby (gives joy). If the birth was hard or the baby was not completely healthy they might be named Deirdre (sad), Mara (bitter) or Claudia (lame). Imagine the impact hearing "bitter" every time someone called your name would have on you? Perhaps it is good that today's societies do not place much importance on the meaning of names - however, I believe, meanings are still important - because they can unknowingly form who we are and often explain our lives. For instance Carin, means "pure one, pure one". Ever since learning that meaning I have understood why I am such a rule follower and the "goody-two shoes" called ME "goody-two shoes" all my school years! I have teasingly said I couldn't have been bad even if I had wanted to be.

ENJOY learning about your name - but, don't take it too seriously! This is for FUN!