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Walking the Walk by Neil Caesar

What a kick in the pants!

When I joined the Planning Committee for last {2005} June's *Cancer as a Turning Point*TM conference in Greenville, South Carolina, as a busy health lawyer, I had no idea how much work would be involved. I also had no idea how fulfilling the entire experience would be for me and for our 800 attendees.

As a lung cancer survivor since 1998, my "cancer year" was life changing. I confess, however, that over the years I lost touch with some of those life affirming lessons. During our preparations, I secretly worried that perhaps I was just "talking the talk" of someone who had grown from my cancer experience. Had I forgotten how to "walk the walk?" Might the Conference reconnect me with the insights and truths I had learned years ago?

Boy, were my wishes surpassed! The Conference was thrilling. I was energized, enlightened, enriched, empowered, and perhaps best of all, embraced. My job was to run the registration process and all of the "outdoors" volunteers. Jan had reminded us to show respect to our guests. It was easy to follow these instructions, because this respect was reciprocated ten-fold. It evolved over the weekend into a shared sense of belonging -- and then into a sublime, selfless love that permeated the entire Conference.

We shared our stories, our pain, our knowledge, our laughter. We shared, synergistically. These emotions were simultaneously intense and calming. It is really difficult to describe. Those of you who have attended a Conference know what I am describing. Those of you who haven't, well, what are you waiting for?

The Greenville Conference inspired and rejuvenated me. It rekindled my hope, perspective and insight. For me and many others, it was a transformative experience.

Like I said, what a kick in the pants!