

**FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING**

**A MIND-BODY-SPIRIT  
RESOURCE GUIDE**

**FOR CANCER PATIENTS, SURVIVORS  
AND CAREGIVERS**

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## **BECOMING AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT *in healing***

As a cancer patient, you are attending this conference because you want more than a diagnosis, a prognosis, and a list of treatment options. You are also searching for meaning in the challenge before you, for hope in coping with this disease, for direction in the course of your life to come. If you are a caregiver, or other support person, chances are you are here to learn all you can about how to help a special person survive the journey through cancer and thrive into the future.

According to the President's Cancer Panel Report, "Living Beyond Cancer," nearly 1.4 million survivors living today were diagnosed more than 20 years ago. This progress has been accompanied by a profound awareness of the psychosocial impact of a cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. Advances are occurring rapidly and patients need reliable, comprehensive and current information to help manage their disease and treatment over time.

### **You are Your Best Primary Caregiver**

As the patient, you must take charge. You must become your own primary advocate for healing.

"People with cancer who participate in their fight for recovery along with their physicians and healthcare team will not only improve their quality of life but may enhance the possibility of recovery." ~ The Wellness Community

Statistics show that cancer patients who exercise a degree of control over their treatment and who question every step in the process have the best prognosis for healing.

Your healthcare team will be listening for cues from you about how you want to receive information, make decisions, and learn about your cancer and its treatment. Effective treatment requires considerable effort by both patient and doctor. Because it is believed that the relationship between patient and doctor or other caregivers can affect the course of an illness, it is important to establish a clear understanding of what each of you can realistically and reasonably expect of each other.

### **Arm Yourself with Knowledge**

In order to take the lead in your treatment, you must be armed with knowledge. With information, you can ask intelligent, detailed questions of your physician and make informed decisions that you feel comfortable with. Express your concerns. Good communication is key. And by exercising some degree of control — feeling that there is something you can do — you may note decreased side-effects of treatment and of the disease itself while simultaneously overruling feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

In taking charge, however, do not feel you need to do it all on your own. Making decisions is sometimes overwhelming. Develop a trusting relationship with your healthcare team and turn to them for guidance, but remember it is up to you to be as much of the deciding vote as you feel comfortable with. Trust what you know about your body.

We often discover how resilient we are when faced with adversity. People who survive and thrive don't necessarily expect everything to turn out right, but do realize that it might if they keep trying. Your journey through cancer, while daunting, is also an opportunity for personal growth.

## RESOURCES

- Anderson, Greg** (1999) *Cancer: 50 Essential Things to Do* explains how the patient can regain control in the face of complexity when feeling fearful and overwhelmed.
- Emerson, Nancy; Pam Leight; Susan Moonan and Terri Schinazi** (2007) *Finding the “Can” in Cancer: Like a Tree...Accept the Rain, Take Deeper Root, and Reach for the Sky*. Four long-term survivors have put together a guidebook to help others who face this illness.
- Geffen, Jeremy** (2006) *The Journey Through Cancer* gives a holistic view of diagnosis, staging, and treatment of cancer, including complementary therapies and the importance of mind-body-spiritual well-being.
- Girard, Vickie** (2001) *There’s No Place Like Hope: A Guide to Beating Cancer in Mind-Sized Bites*. An immediate, practical, and inspiring guide that will empower any patient to better fight and survive cancer, written by someone who has been there.
- Groopman, Jerome** (2005) *The Anatomy of Hope: How People Prevail in the Face of Illness* offers a new way of thinking about hope in a message to families and patients.
- Silver, Julie** (2006) *After Cancer Treatment – Heal faster, better, stronger*. Addresses physical, emotional and spiritual healing with a hands-on guide to survival issues from a psychiatrist and cancer survivor.
- Simon, David** (1999) *Return to Wholeness: Embracing Body, Mind, and Spirit in the Face of Cancer* outlines complementary mind-body approaches to strengthen the immune system and improve quality of life. Its compassion and wisdom will be welcomed by those on the roller coaster of cancer diagnosis and treatment.
- Spiegel, David; Ernest Rosenbaum et al.**, (2007) *Everyone’s Guide to Cancer Survivorship – A Road Map for Better Health* includes lifestyle changes to improve health and longevity, managing side-effects of treatment and how to set goals for the future.

## **BEGINNING THE JOURNEY**

Each cancer patient has a unique story to tell, for each life is unique. And yet, while every individual's journey through cancer is personal, each also shares features in common with other cancer patients. Untold numbers of people have faced the same cancer challenge that you are facing. From their experiences you can draw emotional sustenance and plans of action to help you face your own personal journey. You are not alone.

### **Charting a Course**

Once you get past the shock and denial of a cancer diagnosis, once you calm your emotions and clear your thinking processes, then it is time to begin planning how you are going to deal with your cancer. Seize the moment. The more you procrastinate and delay taking action, the more likely you will abdicate your responsibility to be in charge of your treatment.

Even if you are a long-term survivor of cancer, or a caregiver, a nurse, or a physician, there is much to be learned from the stories of others who have made the journey. Personal stories put a human face on cancer care. Stories of the trials and triumphs of others help us to realize that proper treatment must concentrate on the patient — not the cancer.

In short, cancer therapy must be holistic; that is, it must treat the whole person, not just the disease. And so, standard cancer treatment is not an end-all, but rather a beginning point in your journey into wellness. There is so much more to learn and try in your situation. It is up to you to captain your ship all the way on this voyage of discovery.

So no matter where in the treatment spectrum you fit — from newly-diagnosed patient to experienced physician — you can learn from others and celebrate their life stories.

### **Building Your Treatment Team**

As a patient, you will need to gather a support team to help you throughout your healing journey. Certainly, you will include healthcare professionals such as an oncologist and perhaps other physicians and nurses. Try to find a patient navigator (someone whose job it is to help you understand what you are going through and to find resources to make it easier) as well as a nutritionist and other complementary therapists.

Your family members — a spouse or significant other, a parent, a child — become part of your care team. However, they are often coping with the changes in their own lives and need time. Many survivors incorporate a team of friends for both emotional support and physical help. Just as often, your team may include other survivors who are further along the healing path. Network with others who are journeying with you by joining support groups and attending conferences on health and healing. Enter conversations on the internet concerning cancer.

Do not be embarrassed to bring along a family member to write down what your healthcare team tells you, or use a tape recorder. There is a lot of information to absorb, and trying to understand and remember it all at a time when you are likely to be anxious and emotional is particularly challenging.

Above all, remember that you are not alone. Take heart in the experiences of others. Their life stories can be a roadmap for your own journey.

## RESOURCES

- Anderson, Greg** (2000) *The Cancer Conqueror: An Incredible Journey to Wellness*. Diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer and given thirty days to live, Greg began searching for survivors. He found that a positive, hopeful spirit affects cancer and may even contribute to its cure.
- Armstrong, Lance and Sally Jenkins** (2001) *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* chronicles Armstrong's recovery from testicular cancer.
- Becker, Suzy** (2004) *I had brain surgery, what's your excuse?* An irreverent, inspiring story of an artist overcoming a terrifying medical condition and reclaiming her funny bone.
- Blachman, Linda** (2006) *Another Morning: Voices of Truth and Hope from Mothers With Cancer*. Stories and heart-breaking truths about battling cancer while raising a family.
- Hyde, Susan Sturges** (2001) *No More Bad Hair Days: A Woman's Journey Through Cancer, Chemotherapy and Coping* offers humor, insights, and practical advice in the form of short statements by a survivor of advanced ovarian cancer.
- Ireland, Karen** (2004) *Learning to Trust Myself: Lessons from Cancer and Other Life Dilemmas* takes us on a journey through her own bout with breast cancer, that helps pave the way for all cancer patients to know that options are available.
- Jarvis, Debra** (2007) *It's Not About the Hair and Other Certainties of Life & Cancer*. As an oncology chaplain dealing with her own breast cancer, Jarvis offers compassionate, humorous, wise and sometimes irreverent reflections on important life issues.
- Livingston, Eliza Wood** (2005) *Living With Colon Cancer: Beating the Odds* brings attention to one of the less publicized forms of cancer while sharing an inspiring tale of survival and strength.
- Mack, Stan** (2004) *Janet and Me: An Illustrated Story of Love and Loss*. A sensitive, honest and humorous book that follows Janet and Stan as they navigate the unknown, frustrating and increasingly challenging terrain of cancer land.
- Masten, Ric and Larry Lachman** (2003) *Parallel Journeys: A Spirited Approach to Coping and Living with Cancer*. An integrated approach blending a poet's art and a therapist's science by offering powerful strategies and tips for coping. Both men have been diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- Speier, Jackie; Deborah Collins Stephens; Michealene Cristini Risley and Jan Yanehiro** (2007) *This Is Not The Life I Ordered*. 50 short stories demonstrating how 4 women transformed shock, despair and paralysis into sheer will and guts.
- Woodman, Marion** (2001) *Bone / Dying Into Life* combines Marion's trademark insight with a personal lesson in wisdom, strength, and healing. Written in journal form, she shares her story of using every resource available to her in coming to terms with uterine cancer.

## UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT OPTIONS

The more you know about cancer and its treatment, the easier it is to make decisions about what is right for you. Cancer is not a single disease and, therefore, its treatment varies based on a variety of things: the location of the cancer, its type, the size and stage of the tumor and even the individual's age and genetic make-up.

### Types of Treatment

Within Western medicine — technically called allopathic medicine — the most common forms of treatment are surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and radiation which may be used alone or in combination with one another. Your doctor is likely to talk to you not only about how to treat the cancer cells they can see but also the probability that there may be cancer cells elsewhere in your body that they can't see and how they might treat those as well.

Some of the treatments have potential side-effects. The more common problems include nausea, hair loss, poor wound-healing, lowered white and red blood counts, and depressed appetite. Most of these can be addressed with success by your physician so as to make treatment as comfortable as possible.

In addition to allopathic practices, there are numerous complementary therapies available to augment standard treatment. Many of these are covered later in this guide. More and more, mainstream medicine is choosing to include the best of these complementary programs in an integrated medicine approach to cancer.

There are numerous good pamphlets that talk about your specific type of cancer and its treatment. Ask your healthcare provider or call the American Cancer Society. Several classic texts give more detailed information about cancer and its treatment and are written specifically to help patients and their caregivers understand the treatment process. In addition, the members of your healthcare team are good sources of information.

### Clinical Trials

A half century ago, there were few good treatments for many cancers. While the overall survival rates for cancer patients are improving, there are still some cancers for which current therapies are not as effective at producing results for all patients. Because of this challenge, clinical trials are a growing modality to try out new approaches to cancer treatment.

Clinical trials offer patients access to the most advanced treatments available for a particular type and stage of disease. There are several phases of clinical trials from Phase III which compares a new treatment that has been shown to be safe and effective with standard treatments all the way to Phase I which focuses on therapies that appear promising in the laboratory but are just now being provided to patients.

There are clinical trials for almost all cancer types as well as trials that are studying different ways to manage or reverse side-effects of treatment. There are trials studying ways to decrease the chance of recurrence as well as those looking specifically at measuring and enhancing quality of life of cancer survivors, such as yoga for breast cancer patients.

Not everyone is appropriate for a clinical trial and not all clinical trials are available in all locations. It is important to talk to your doctor or healthcare professional to ask if a clinical trial might be right for you.

## RESOURCES

### Internet Connections

**American Cancer Society** – Clinical Trials Matching Service; 800-303-5691; [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**Cancer.Net (formerly People Living With Cancer)** – [www.cancer.net/portal/site/patient](http://www.cancer.net/portal/site/patient)

**CenterWatch** – Clinical Trials Listing Service – [www.centerwatch.com](http://www.centerwatch.com)

**Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups, Inc.** – [www.cancertrialshelp.org](http://www.cancertrialshelp.org)

**National Cancer Institute** – [www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials)

**National Institutes of Health (NIH)** – [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov)

### References

**Alschuler, Lise N. and Karolyn A. Gazella** (2010) *The Definitive Guide to Cancer: An Integrative Approach to Prevention, Treatment, and Healing*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., presents an overview of what cancer is, its causes and preventative strategies, an in-depth approach to integrative treatment options, descriptions of key body functions, and discussions of more than twenty specific cancers. Delivers hope.

**American Cancer Society** (2009) *Complete Guide to Complementary & Alternative Cancer Therapies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., a comprehensive guide to respond to the growing public demand for accurate and timely information on complementary and alternative cancer therapies.

**Bodai, Ernie** (2001) *I Flunked My Mammogram!* Dr. Bodai, inventor of the breast cancer stamp, writes about what every woman needs to know about breast cancer.

**Lerner, Michael** (1996) *Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer* is a compassionate overview of both conventional and complementary approaches to cancer treatment. Extensive list of resources for many treatment areas.

**Pelletier, Kenneth** (2007) *New Medicine* written by a distinguished team of leading health experts, from both sides of the Atlantic, who present the best of integrative treatments for over 100 ailments.

**Servan-Schreiber, David** (2008) *Anti-Cancer: A New Way of Life* provides advice on behavioral changes to make, that may decrease one's chances of cancer or its recurrence, from a psychiatrist and cancer survivor.

**Wagner, Thomas and Michael Bugeja** (2001) *Living Without Fear: Understanding Cancer and the New Therapies* provides knowledge that will help you understand what cancer is and how it progresses at the cellular and molecular level.

## **MAINTAINING YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH**

The human body is a wonderfully well-tuned mechanism, so perfect in fact that we hardly take notice of it until something goes wrong. It is surprising that the body performs so well, considering the conditions under which it works and the environmental factors it is subjected to. One of the things that has kept your body in good order during your life is your immune system, a powerful force for healing and repair.

When things do go terribly awry, as when your body develops cancer, your immune and repair systems are stretched to the maximum. To add to the discomfort, you may undergo chemotherapy, surgery, or radiation treatments which will further depress your immune system and strain your ability to repair cellular damage. At this point, your body needs all the raw materials and help it can get for recovery.

### **Nutrition**

You may want to start by beginning a good dietary regimen, one recommended by a nutritionist with experience in treating cancer patients. There are a variety of dietary plans — find one that you can live with. Make sure that your choices contain plenty of fruits and vegetables and reduced amounts of fats and red meat. Use organic foods if possible. And prepare your food in a fashion that does not convert good food into cancer-producing agents (i.e., limit pan-searing and grilling).

### **Supplements**

You may wish to supplement your diet with agents that boost your immune system, energy levels, and overall health. For this purpose, many cancer patients use CoEnzyme Q10, Alpha Lipoic Acid, N-Acetyl Cysteine, L-Carnitine, derivatives of medicinal mushrooms, a complete vitamin and mineral regimen including zinc, selenium, and extra vitamin D, and vegetable extracts like curcumin, lycopene, and resveratrol. Talk with your doctor to make sure there are no interactions between any supplements you may take and the formal treatment you are undergoing for your cancer.

### **Exercise**

Your body was designed to move. With age, a sedentary lifestyle, and illness, we all tend to grind to a halt. Movement, from the muscles of your heart to the actions of arms and legs, promotes the transport of extra oxygen and life-giving fluids and nutrients to all parts of your body. You need to distribute all your resources to every organ and extremity.

Exercise, whether it be from aerobics, strength-training, or yoga, brings your body back to life, and it makes you feel good, often dispelling the cancer blues. Of course, depending on your physical state, you may not be able to exercise vigorously, but there is always something you can do to get your body moving. Consult with your physician as to what type of physical exercise would be appropriate for you. Review all the literature you can find about the value of exercise to the cancer patient.

### **Reduce Stress and Environmental Toxins**

Stress has been shown to have a significant negative influence on the immune system. There is considerable evidence that reducing the body's reactions to stress through any of a variety of techniques (from yoga and meditation to support groups and prayer) can improve immune functioning, quality of life, and potentially the effectiveness of treatment. Likewise, do all you can to eliminate the toxic elements of your environment, including cigarette smoke.

## RESOURCES

- Alschuler, Lise N. and Karolyn A. Gazella** (2011) *Five to Thrive: Your Cutting-Edge Cancer Prevention Plan* – The inspirational concept of "thriving" is promoted in this groundbreaking plan, which pinpoints five specific pathways that are essential to preventing cancer: immunity, inflammation, hormones, insulin resistance, and detoxification/digestion.
- Balch, James F.** (1998) *The Super Anti-Oxidants* discusses the role of anti-oxidants in promoting health and enhancing cancer treatment.
- Chilton, Floyd** (2006) *Win the War Within* describes the role of inflammation in many chronic diseases, including cancer, and provides a nutritional plan to deal with it.
- Cowan, Thomas, MD; Sally Fallon; Jaimen McMillan** (2004) *The Fourfold Path to Healing: Working with the Laws of Nutrition, Therapeutics, Movement and Meditation in the Art of Medicine* merges the wisdom of traditional societies, the most modern findings of western medicine and the esoteric teaching of the ancients.
- Katz, Rebecca** (2009) *The Cancer-Fighting Kitchen* offers nourishing, big-flavor recipes for cancer treatment and recovery. Includes customized menu plans specially formulated for specific treatment phases, cancer types, side-effects and flavor preferences.
- Mathai, Kimberly** (2004) *The Cancer Lifeline Cookbook* has 100 easy-to-make recipes and features some of the latest research about the connection between food and cancer, as well as the "Top Ten Super Foods" that may protect against cancer.
- Mazo, Ellen and Keith Berndtson** (2002) *The Immune Advantage* presents information on nutrition, stress reduction, mind-body work, music therapy and other approaches designed to strengthen the immune response against disease.
- Moss, Ralph** (2000) *Antioxidants Against Cancer* shares knowledge about antioxidant therapy and supplement use in the controversial world of alternative medicine.
- Murray, Reilly et al** (2002) *How to Prevent and Treat Cancer with Natural Medicine* – four prominent doctors of natural medicine offer advice on what to eat, supplements to take, what to avoid before surgery, what helps heal the body and what boosts the effectiveness of conventional medicine.
- Quillin, Patrick** (2005, Revised) *Beating Cancer with Nutrition*. Up-to-date information about the human body's own "host defense mechanisms" in the war on cancer based on a multidisciplinary, scientific approach to health.
- Raftopoulous, Harry and Erin O'Driscoll** (2003) *Exercises for Chemotherapy Patients* describes a variety of exercises to use during chemo.
- Schwartz, Anna** (2004) *Cancer Fitness: Exercise Programs for Patients & Survivors*, with a Forward by Lance Armstrong – A reassuring and informative book which stresses the benefits of exercise during cancer treatments.

## UTILIZING THE POWER OF THE MIND

The medical community is increasingly aware of how the mind and body work together in the patient's overall health and recovery from illness. Making the mind-body connection means understanding that your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes may play a significant role in your body's response to treatment.

One of the most commonly felt and difficult aspects of having cancer is the sense that you no longer have control over your life. A range of "self-generated" techniques — often referred to as mind-body methods — can help provide a renewed sense of control. These techniques, which will be detailed in the next section, can dramatically impact belief systems and give renewed hope to the cancer patient.

There is increasing evidence that hope is essential to quality of life for a person living with cancer. It can generate a deep-seated belief that each individual has the power to create good from whatever circumstances he or she faces. There is also some evidence that belief and expectation — the key elements of hope — can actually alter one's experience and physiology. Equally as important, hope often sets off a domino effect, a chain reaction which allows us to see opportunities and avenues for growth that we might not otherwise have seen.

### **You Are More Than Your Body**

Approaching treatment from a holistic view opens the door to a whole set of tools that can be brought to bear against cancer, at the same time recognizing the many facets of the person. In the world of the body, mind still matters. And one's mind is a powerful, multilayered entity whose mastery can produce surprising results.

### **Who Is in Charge?**

Each of us likes to think we are in command of ourselves; yet, a moment's reflection will prove this is not the case. Are you consciously causing your digestive system to absorb your last meal? Are you making your heart beat? Are you directing your lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, bladder, thyroid gland, spleen, red blood cells, immune system white cells, and so forth to perform their function?

Beneath the veneer of consciousness in which our ego resides lies a vast, machine-like entity commonly referred to as the subconscious mind. By the estimates of some scientists, the subconscious mind performs over a half million operations for each conscious operation. Hands down, it is much more powerful. Reaching this enormous resource and positively influencing it is the goal of mind-body medicine. People in the mind-body field often refer to the subconscious mind and its immune and repair emissaries as the "inner physician."

To positively influence the inner physician, we have to overcome a number of obstacles. Our conscious beliefs may block our attempts, and our more powerful subconscious may have built-in habit patterns, many of which were created in the impressionable days of childhood, which thwart our efforts at mind-body direction. Yet there are methods, such as those in the next section, which allow us to break through the barriers and set our mind-body system on a course for healing.

So take three deep breaths (research shows this releases calming, pleasurable endorphins in our brains) and plunge into the exciting world of new controls over the inner you.

## RESOURCES

- Benson, Herbert** (1996) *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief*. From the “relaxation response” doctor comes a blueprint for healing and transforming your life.
- Bolen, Jean Shinoda** (2007) *Close to the Bone: Life-threatening Illness as a Soul Journey* (revised, 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.) – focuses on how stories, prayer, visualizations, and a multitude of creative activities can be elements in healing body and soul.
- Buchholz, William & Susan** (2001) *Live Longer, Live Larger: A Holistic Approach for Cancer Patients and Their Families* is a handbook for thriving with cancer, from an oncologist-therapist team.
- Goleman, Daniel and Joel Gurin** (1993) *Mind-Body Medicine: How to Use Your Mind for Better Health* describes the vital role of the mind in health.
- Holland, Jimmie and Sheldon Lewis** (2000) *The Human Side of Cancer* – provides practical and compassionate guidance for understanding and tapping into mind-body connection.
- LeShan, Lawrence** (1994) *Cancer as a Turning Point: A Handbook for People with Cancer, Their Families, and Health Professionals* – focuses on the use of holistic health approaches to change how one looks at cancer and to stimulate the body’s inner healing abilities.
- Lipton, Bruce** (2005) *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter, & Miracles*. The new field of epigenetics shows how influences from outside the cell control cell expression – a must-read for the more technically minded.
- McFarland, John Robert** (2007) *I am Whole Now That I Have Cancer – Reflections on Life and Healing for Cancer Patients and Those Who Love Them*.
- Miller, Emmett** (1997) *Deep Healing* explores all facets of mind-body research and puts the tools for self-healing in the hands of all patients, caregivers, and physicians.
- Myss, Caroline** (1998) *Why People Don’t Heal and How They Can* is a must-read for anyone seeking to participate in repairing one’s mind, body and spirit.
- Naparstek, Belleruth** (1995) *Staying Well With Guided Imagery*. A manual that teaches many techniques in guided imagery for helping the mind and body heal.
- Pert, Candace** (1997) *Molecules of Emotion: The Science Behind Mind-Body Medicine* describes the link between the neurochemicals of the body and the subconscious mind that is in control of them.
- Simonton, O. Carl; Stephanie Matthews-Simonton and James L. Creighton** (1992) *Cancer, Getting Well Again*. This revolutionary book introduces the scientific basis for the “will to live.”
- Schlitz, Marilyn Mandala; Tina Amorok, and Marc Micozzi** (2004) *Consciousness and Healing: Integral Approaches to Mind Body Medicine* promotes a model of healing in which personal relationships, emotions, meaning, and belief systems are viewed as fundamental points of connection between body, mind, spirit, society, and nature.

## TOOLS FOR SELF-HEALING

Growing evidence indicates that complementary and alternative medical practices can reduce stress and anxiety and enhance immunity — the body's natural defense against disease. Certain techniques help many patients decrease the impact of cancer and its treatment on their lives. This, in turn, may help keep patients on their treatment schedules and increase opportunities for longer and stronger lives after cancer.

Although there are no scientific studies that conclusively show that complementary practices and alternative therapies can cure disease, used in conjunction with medical treatment there is significant evidence that they can be extremely helpful in:

- Relieving symptoms & side-effects of cancer and its treatment
- Controlling pain and improving comfort
- Relieving stress and anxiety
- Enhancing physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
- Improving overall quality of life

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) organizes these practices into 5 major categories of approaches. Those categories and the therapies that are often included within them are:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| I. Alternative Medical Systems    | IV. Manipulative and Body-based systems |
| a. Ayurvedic medicine             | a. Chiropractic practices               |
| b. Homeopathic medicine           | b. Osteopathic practice                 |
| c. Naturopathic medicine          | c. Massage                              |
| d. Traditional Chinese medicine   |   |
| II. Mind-Body Interventions       | V. Energy Therapies                     |
| a. Prayer                         | a. QiGong                               |
| b. Meditation                     | b. Reiki                                |
| c. Guided Imagery                 | c. Therapeutic or healing touch         |
| d. Art, Music and Dance therapy   | d. Electromagnetic Fields               |
| III. Biologically-based Therapies |   |
| a. Dietary supplements            |   |
| b. Herbal products                |   |

Focused exercise practices like Yoga and T'ai Chi are often considered a part of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), as are specialized diets and nutrition. Chinese therapies like acupuncture and acupressure along with their American spin-off, the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT™) offer relief from physical and mental pain as well as control of a number of other problems ranging from obesity to phobias.

Mind-body techniques come to the fore in meditation, guided imagery, hypnosis, affirmations, and rituals. All of these seem to harness subconscious forces to promote healing.

Just as with all information, especially health-related, it is critical to evaluate the reliability of the information you find, especially on the internet. When seeking CAM providers, be as careful as choosing a doctor. Many CAM specialties have licensing and certification programs.

## RESOURCES

### Internet Connections

Academy for Guided Imagery – [www.thehealingmind.org](http://www.thehealingmind.org)

Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine – [www.nccam.nih.gov/](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/)

EmbodiWorks – reliable resources on integrative cancer care – [www.embodiworks.org](http://www.embodiworks.org)

### References

**Barnett, Libby and Maggie Chambers** (1996) *Reiki Energy Medicine* describes the methodology of this healing touch specialty.

**Brown, Michael** (2005) *The Presence Process: A Healing Journey into Present Moment Awareness*. Living in the moment allows full concentration on healing.

**Cassileth, Barrie** (1999) *The Alternative Medicine Handbook: The Complete Reference Guide to Alternative and Complementary Therapies*. All its name implies.

**Fisher, Stanley** (2000) *Discovering the Power of Self-Hypnosis*. This guide, using AMA-approved techniques, can help patients reduce stress, overcome fear, alleviate pain, promote healing, speed recovery after surgery, and much more.

**Hirshberg, Caryle and Marc Ian Barasch** (1996) *Remarkable Recovery: What Extraordinary Healings Tell Us About Getting Well and Staying Well* is a study of individuals who miraculously recovered from terminal illnesses.

**Reed, Terry and Susan Ezra** (2008) *Guided Imagery and Beyond: Stories of Healing and Transformation*. In this book you will find a wide array of fascinating stories, showing the width and depth of what can be accomplished with guided imagery.

**Rossmann, Martin** (2003) *Fighting Cancer From Within: How to Use The Power of Your Mind For Healing* conveys the healing powers of imagery with techniques that can help cancer patients.

**Siegel, Bernie** (1988) (Book & CD versions) *Love, Medicine & Miracles*. An outstanding affirmation that love matters and miracles do happen.

**Simonton, O. Carl** (1996) (Videotape) *Affirmations for Getting Well Again*. Excellent photography draws the viewer into the affirmations.

**Singh Khalsa, Dharma and Cameron Stauth** (2001) *Meditation as Medicine: Activate the Power of Your Natural Healing Force* demonstrates how meditation fosters physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and growth while addressing a vast number of afflictions.

**Weil, Andrew** (2008) *Spontaneous Healing: How to Discover and Enhance Your Body's Natural Ability to Maintain and Heal Itself* is considered one of the best books on alternative treatments and how to integrate them with standard medical advice.

**Yance, Donny** (1999) *Herbal Medicine, Healing and Cancer*. One of the nation's most respected herbalist's guide to alternative cancer medicine.

## **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

For the cancer patient, the emotions that well up along the journey from diagnosis to treatment to healing can be overpowering. Yet in this maelstrom of feelings can also come some of the most uplifting experiences of the journey.

Although there are few scientific studies determining the therapeutic value for appreciation of the arts or natural world, many clinicians have observed and documented significant benefits among patients who have participated in such activities. To connect with something beautiful, loving, exciting, and expressive often lets persons with emotional turmoil find distraction from pain and anxiety, release from hidden emotions, and find a sense of connection with the outer world and control of their inner world.

Here are a few avenues to explore in which you can direct your emotional expression in positive ways:

### **Art**

Creating art, viewing it, and talking about it provides a way for people to cope with emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, and express unspoken and often unconscious concerns about their illness. Many doctors encourage their patients to draw interpretations of their disease in order to uncover hidden feelings.

### **Gardening – Nature**

Appreciation of the natural world seems ingrained in our deepest makeup. We all are creatures of the natural world, despite our veneer of civilization. Whether by helping things grow or just getting out in nature to observe the many forms that life takes, we open a deep connection to the oneness of all. Nature is the ultimate “soul food.”

### **Movement**

Dance or movement therapies can be used to improve mental and physical health. In addition to the exercise benefits, they often help patients develop a positive body image after treatment, decrease isolation and body tension, and improve self-esteem and one’s sense of well-being.

### **Music**

Music therapy uses music to promote healing and enhance wellness. Scientific studies have shown that music can be effective in easing physical symptoms associated with some cancer therapies, decrease pain intensity and dependence on pain medications, enhance relaxation and breathing, and decrease sleeplessness. Some researchers suggest that even “primitive” music forms like drumming can cause the significant release of cytokines, the protein substances secreted by cells that help direct and regulate immune responses and natural killer (NK) cells which seek and destroy cancer cells.

### **Pets**

For those patients with a deep affection for their dog or cat or other pet, there are few things more rewarding than the unconditional love given by a pet. Their simple honesty in expressing their feelings can help us to open the doors to our feelings.

### **Writing**

Writing in a journal can be an effective way to handle the emotions that living with cancer has triggered. Often people facing serious illness find it difficult to express their feelings openly to others. However, evidence suggests that when we keep our emotions bottled up, we increase stress and its impact on our bodies. Keeping a journal can release these emotions as well as document our healing journey.

## RESOURCES

- Bray, Sharon** (2004) *A Healing Journey: Writing Together Through Breast Cancer* – a program designed to help patients express their humanity through writing about their cancer experiences.
- Cameron, Julia** (2007) *The Complete Artist's Way: Creativity as a Spiritual Practice*. Using creativity to enhance spiritual growth and healing.
- Fox, John** (1997) *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem Making* – Poignant poems and intimate commentary reveal how people have used poem-making to explore matters of universal concern.
- Gaynor, Mitchell** (1999) *The Healing Power of Sound: Recovering from Life-Threatening Illness Using Sound, Voice, and Music*. The integration of music, vocalization, breathing, and meditation techniques can assist self-healing in critically ill patients.
- Halprin, Anna** (2002) *Returning to Health with Dance, Movement and Imagery* – Anna weaves her own story as a cancer survivor into the wisdom of her life experience as a dancer, teacher, and facilitator for healing.
- Mazer, Susan and Dallas Smith** (1999) *Sound Choices: Using Music to Design the Environments in Which You Live, Work, and Heal* shows you how to incorporate music into your surroundings to help you improve all areas of your life.
- McElroy, Susan** (1998) *Animals as Teachers and Healers: True Stories and Reflections* weaves the connection between the quality of our other-than-human relationships and the level of passion for life and meaning, and the current state of our health and well-being.
- Murray, Elizabeth** (1997) *Cultivating Sacred Space: Gardening for the Soul* explores creating natural healing spaces.
- Pennebaker, James** (1997) *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions* presents evidence that personal self-disclosure in writing enhances our emotional health and boosts our physical well-being.
- Wise, Nina** (2002) *A Big New Free Happy Unusual Life: Self-Expression and Spiritual Practice For Those Who Have Time for Neither*. A funny, soulful guide for anyone seeking pleasure, wonder and adventure in their life. As a teacher and performer, in clearly explained, 10-minute exercises that can be performed almost anywhere, Nina points the way toward a fuller, more creative life.

## **FAITH, SPIRITUALITY, AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE**

Spirituality is that dimension beyond the biological, beyond the tangible, that gives our lives purpose. Some people define spirituality as the inner self; others see it as a relationship with God that calls us to be fully who we are. For many cancer patients, this is an extremely important part of their healing. They are able to use their cancer experience as a wake-up call — an opportunity to seek meaning and follow their yearning to make a difference with their lives.

### **Choosing a Meaningful Life**

When we begin choosing to do what really matters to us, despite adversity, we become more resilient. We have made an active choice to not only survive, but to thrive — to become fully engaged in every moment. Research suggests that people who have learned to thrive share common traits — determination, curiosity, and flexibility. They have found a way to accept their circumstances while deriving strength from a sense of renewed purpose and a faith in their ability to cope with whatever lies on the road ahead. Living a purposeful life and connecting to the future have been shown to increase positive expectations and hope — important allies in living with cancer. But you have to reach for it — it doesn't come naturally.

### **The Power of Prayer**

For many cancer survivors, prayer is another vital part of their healing process — both from their own prayer life and the prayers of others. Since Dr. Jeffrey Levin first pointed out the strong link between spiritual faith and healing, medicine has begun to recognize that religious beliefs and involvement often play a significant role in promoting health and well-being among many of their patients.

Beyond the more accepted format of religious faith and the community of believers that provide support, there may well be another dimension to prayer. When prayer, even that without religious overtones, is directed at someone who is sick, there appears to be a healing force at work. Researchers in this field, like Drs. Larry Dossey and Elizabeth Targ, tend to call this form of prayer Intentionality, and they have statistical data that indicates it can have a positive impact for healing.

### **Looking for Meaning in Life**

Exerting a conscious effort to find meaning in your everyday endeavors can be both rewarding and enlightening. You might like to try some of the following consciousness-directing techniques:

- Awareness (mindfulness) – the habitual practice of attention to the present and its full complexity.
- Intention – the conscious determination to improve the health of another person or oneself, the special form of prayer noted above.
- Expectation – belief and anticipation of improvement may set the forces of the subconscious mind (and perhaps other forces) into action in an attempt to meet those expectations.
- Hope – the expectation that a desired goal can be achieved. Hope in the face of adversity is a pillar of strength; whereas, loss of hope leads to a downward spiral in quality of life.

If you choose living to the fullest extent in your journey through cancer, then consider being aware of the gifts of every day, for they bring hope and expectation of a bright future. Place your intention on healing and have those around you do the same. There is power in the spiritual realm.

## RESOURCES

- Bartlow, Bruce** (2000) *Medical Care of the Soul* is a practical and healing guide to end-of-life issues for families, patients, and healthcare providers, offering inspiring spiritual guidance.
- Borysenko, Joan** (1993) *Fire in the Soul: A New Psychology of Spiritual Optimism* expounds a philosophy which views life crises as opportunities for personal growth and spiritual homecoming.
- Cunningham, Alastair J.** (2002) *Bringing Spirituality into Your Healing Journey*. A comprehensive program to help patients get past feelings of hopelessness or despair and address questions of possible meaning in their disease and in their lives.
- Dossey, Larry** (1996) *Prayer Is Good Medicine: How to Reap Healing Benefits of Prayer*.
- Feldman, David** (2007) *The End-of-Life Handbook: A Compassionate Guide to Connecting With and Caring for a Dying Loved One*, written for families facing the serious illness of a loved one.
- Koenig, Harold G. and Malcolm McConnell** (2001) *The Healing Power of Faith: How Belief and Prayer Can Help You Triumph Over Disease*.
- Levin, Jeffrey S.** (2001) *God, Faith, and Health* focuses on the scientific basis of the how and why of a spirituality-health connection.
- Levine, Stephen** (1997) *A Year to Live – How to live this year as if it were your last* teaches us how to live each moment mindfully so that when the ultimate moment does arrive, we will not feel it has come too soon.
- Malkin, Gary** (2003) *Graceful Passages*. Through life-affirming music and messages from celebrated spiritual thinkers from a variety of traditions, this book and 2-CD set examines what matters most, transforming fear and pain into a pathway for healing, compassion, and understanding.
- Muller, Wayne** (2004) *Learning to Pray: How We Find Heaven on Earth*. A clear and inspiring guide to praying well that will be treasured by anyone seeking a deeper spiritual life.
- Nepo, Mark** (2006) *The Exquisite Risk: Daring to Live an Authentic Life* – a cancer patient’s personal reflection on how daring to embrace all that life has to offer can give us a deeper appreciation of its meaning and beauty.
- Nepo, Mark** (2011) *The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have* – written in response to his journey through cancer, Nepo Nepo has created a day book not only for people going through life-threatening situations but for everyone. Chosen by Oprah Winfrey as one of her “favorite things.”
- Remen, Rachel** (2006) *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal* – These stories will rekindle the humanity in you and prompt you to take stock of and count your blessings.
- Schlitz, Marilyn Mandala; Cassandra Vieten; and Tina Amorok** (2008) *Living Deeply: The Art & Science of Transformation in Everyday Life* – is the product of a decade-long investigation into transformations in human consciousness. It brings what is known about achieving personal transformation off the mountain top, down from the ivory tower, out of the laboratory, and into your hands.

## **SOCIAL SUPPORT**

It is normal to worry about side-effects, fear pain, or have emotional distress when faced with cancer and undergoing treatment. However, it is important that you remember that there are people who understand what it is like and that you are not alone. Sometimes patients turn to family and friends to support them through difficult times, but their own distress over your condition may make it difficult for them to provide all the support you may need.

### **The Value of Support Groups**

There has been extensive research on the positive effects of support groups as a method of coping with cancer, improving quality of life and, in some studies, suggesting an increased survival. Dr. David Spiegel first documented the benefits of support groups for breast cancer patients in 1989. Since then, there has been an increased understanding and appreciation of the role of psychosocial support for cancer survivors in assisting patients with the emotional and spiritual journeys and those of their families.

Support groups come in many different forms — site specific; newly diagnosed; treatment based, such as stem cell transplant; or any other common links, such as young patients. A whole network of social support programs have developed online via the internet, allowing survivors the ability to connect with others with similar situations. For those patients who feel mixing with others with like-problems is depressing, many find support through other types of groups such as yoga, music therapy or art. The important thing to remember is that there is something for everyone and options are available that are likely to fit your needs and comfort zone.

In addition to providing information and practical suggestions for lifting spirits and looking/feeling better, they often help reduce three of the most common stressors associated with cancer — unwanted aloneness, feelings of loss of control, and loss of hope.

Joining with other cancer patients in a therapeutic setting forms a powerful treatment modality. This joint effort helps you to focus on a number of important things:

- You are not alone. Others are on the same journey with you.
- You are introduced to new ideas, many of which are liberating.
- You escape the more rigid habit patterns and stresses of home, work, and treatment.
- You find ways to optimize your quality of life.
- You receive emotional and spiritual support as you meet your cancer challenge.

### **Local Support Groups**

The simplest approach to joining with others is to seek out and become part of a local support group. Many hospitals and clinics host such groups that meet regularly, usually monthly. Within the groups, members share stories and receive the latest information regarding cancer and its ramifications. More important than the information is the emotional support that members give each other. Remember, there are important statistics showing improved survival rates for members taking part in support groups.

Beyond the local level there are abundant resources nationwide that offer wellness and holistic support, often in spa-like settings. Finally, there has been the recent development of online internet cancer communities and support groups through which patients connect with survivors across the country and the world.

## RESOURCES

### Internet Connections

**Breast Cancer Connections** – information and support for breast cancer patients and their loved ones; Palo Alto, CA; (650) 326-6686; [www.bconnections.org](http://www.bconnections.org)

**Cancer Support Community**, also known as **The Wellness Community** – free services for people with cancer; support groups, workshops and classes; Mountain View (650) 968-5000; East Bay (925) 933-0107; [www.twc-bayarea.org](http://www.twc-bayarea.org)

**WomenCARE** – support groups and peer navigators for women living with cancer in the Santa Cruz area; (831) 457-2273; [www.womencaresantacruz.org](http://www.womencaresantacruz.org)

**Women's Cancer Resource Center of Oakland** – information, legal services, support for women with cancer; (888) 421-7900; [www.wcrc.org](http://www.wcrc.org)

### References

**Miller, James E.** (1998) *Effective Support Groups*

**Nichols, Keith and John Jenkinson** (2006) *Leading a Support Group*.

**Schiff, Harriet Sarnoff** (1996) *The Support Group Manual: A Session-By-Session Guide*.

**Shrock, Dean** (2009) *Why Love Heals, Mind-Body-Spirit Medicine* offers considerable evidence and scientific proof that love heals. Connecting with people emotionally and spiritually is the essence of life and health and leads to a longer, healthier, joy-filled life.

**Spiegel, David and Catherine Classen** (2000) *Group Therapy for Cancer Patients: A Research-based Handbook of Psychosocial Care* explores the dynamics and value of support groups in extending the quality and length of life of cancer patients.

## CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Often in the rush to care for the person with cancer, caregivers — the husbands, wives, children, friends and partners on the frontlines journeying alongside their diagnosed loved ones — can be overlooked. Caring for a person with cancer involves many dimensions. They may be pressed into service as your taxi driver, medications supervisor, liaison with doctors and insurance companies, accountant and bill payer, caterer to your fleeting food whims, cheerleader, and confidant.

It is natural for caregivers to feel stressed and overwhelmed at times. In many ways, the battle with cancer is rougher on those that love you than it is on you. Caregivers must search for the best way to support the person they care for, deal with their own emotions, and try to keep everything else going normally. Common emotional experiences include sadness, frustration, anger, emptiness, loneliness, insecurity, resentment, grief and guilt. Caregivers often experience physical symptoms such as insomnia, fatigue, headaches, or stomach problems as well. These feelings and physical symptoms are so prevalent that we now refer to the overwhelmed state as the *caregiver syndrome*. Just like the cancer patient, there are things the caregiver can do to cope with the stresses they face.

### **If you are the caregiver**

It is critical that caregivers make their own well-being a priority. It is almost impossible to be available to be a supportive caregiver if you are worn out and experiencing distress yourself. The Wellness Community refers to it as becoming a *strengthened ally* — coping with your own needs. Evidence shows that caregivers who participate in an educational or support group not only feel less stressed but report an increased confidence in their ability to provide care and support. Here are some ideas you might consider:

- Educate yourself along with your loved one.
- Attend to your physical wellbeing — eat well, get sleep, exercise.
- Engage in activities that trigger the relaxation response (journaling, art, meditation, yoga).
- Seek support through a support group, a family member, or a pastor.
- Maintain friendships and seek out new ones.
- Continue with hobbies & preserve routines.
- Focus on self-care and setting limits, and seek respite, when needed.
- Find healthy outlets to talk about and deal with frustration and other emotions.
- Share your feelings and fears; talk to your loved one about their illness and the future.

### **If you are the one being cared for**

Caregivers need a break. It is not uncommon for caregivers to feel that they cannot have fun while someone they are caring for is coping with cancer. To “recharge their batteries,” they have to get away periodically. They must experience things that are bright and alive and untainted by cancer. As much as you need them to be there for you, let them take time for themselves, with your blessings.

And in the times when they are there with you, express your gratitude. Everyone perks up when thanked for a job well-done. Not only will gratitude buoy up your caregivers, but, surprisingly, it will buoy up your psyche, too. The process of giving thanks is an act of connection. It links you to others with love.

## RESOURCES

### Internet Connections

**National Family Caregivers Association** – (800) 896-3650; [www.nfcacares.org](http://www.nfcacares.org)

**NCI – Caring for the Caregiver** – [www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/familyfriends](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/familyfriends)

**Other Sites for Caregiving** – [www.caregivinghelp.org](http://www.caregivinghelp.org); [www.cancercaregiving.com](http://www.cancercaregiving.com);  
[www.strengthforcaring.com](http://www.strengthforcaring.com)

### Local Connections

**Kara** – provides counseling, education and support to people dealing with life-threatening illness & bereavement. Grief program for children/teens that have experienced death of a family member. Palo Alto, CA; (650) 321-5272; [www.kara-grief.org](http://www.kara-grief.org)

**Well Spouse Foundation** – an association of spousal caregivers. Northern California contact: Sharron Blakeley; (510) 243-1137; [Sharronab@mac.com](mailto:Sharronab@mac.com)

### References

**American Cancer Society** (2006) Editors: Houts, Peter S. and Julia A Bucher. *Caregiving: A Step-by-Step Resource for Caring for the Person with Cancer at Home*, revised edition.

**Balch, Dave** (2006) *Cancer for Two: An Inspiring True Story and Guide for Cancer Patients and Their Partners* offers personal insights into the joys and challenges of caregiving.

**Glader, Sue** *Nowhere Hair* gently explains life during cancer treatment and/or chemotherapy and addresses the biggest concerns of children ages 3 – 7.

**Hennessey, Maya** (2006) *If Only I'd Had This Caregiving Book* – workshop format guides caregivers along a path of self-discovery and development of their own effective healing.

**Hope, Lori** (2005) *Help Me Live; 20 Things People with Cancer Want You to Know* helps caretakers and friends understand the impact of their words on the cancer survivor.

**Malkin, Gary** (2005) *Care for the Journey: Messages and Music for Sustaining the Heart of Healthcare*. A CD of inspiring messages from distinguished leaders in compassionate healthcare, scored with original music. Helps caregivers and health professionals reconnect to the meaning of their work.

**McLeod, Beth Witrogen** (2000) *Caregiving: The Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss, and Renewal* – a powerful blend of storytelling and practical information.

**Mintz, Suzanne Geffen** (2002) *Love, Honor & Value: A Family Caregiver Speaks Out about the Choices and Challenges of Caregiving* – an inspirational and practical guide by the co-founder of the National Family Caregivers Association.

**Samples, Pat, Diane Larsen and Marvin Larsen** (2000) *Self-care for Caregivers: A Twelve Step Approach* – offers sensitive and sensible guidance for emotional and spiritual growth.

## HELP – SEEKING AND GIVING BACK

Everyone approaches the healing process slightly differently. Every cancer patient starts their journey at a different place with differing skills and ways of dealing with the obstacles and opportunities they face. This guide attempts to provide you with tools that will be helpful in navigating the journey ahead. For patients and caregivers who love to read, we have provided a diversity of materials — from personal stories to scientific references. This is merely a sampling, however. We encourage you to visit the patient library at your healthcare facility and to talk to others about resources helpful to you.

Many cancer patients turn to the Internet for information about their disease, for ideas about coping and, more frequently, to establish emotional connections to other cancer survivors. Cancer research is accelerating and breakthroughs seem to occur regularly, often monthly. The Internet has provided an easy way for anyone to keep informed. If you need help using this resource, many hospitals and libraries have people on staff specifically trained to guide you through the process.

There is an overwhelming amount of information about cancer. For example, as of winter, 2011 the keyword “cancer” entered into a Google™ search brought **142 million** responses. Obviously, it is impossible for any one person to absorb it all and all too easy to spend hours looking for answers. Many cancer organizations maintain websites that are designed to provide links to a variety of types of information in one place. They are a good starting point.

While the Internet can be a tremendous source of information, it can also be a source of misinformation. It is important to evaluate the credibility of your sources. Many sites are designed to “sell” rather than to inform. In addition, not everything you find on the Internet — or anywhere, for that matter — applies to your particular circumstances.

Many cancer survivors prefer talking to a real person. Treatment facilities usually provide patient navigators, social workers, librarians or other trained professionals to provide you with the information and support you need. The American Cancer Society provides a toll-free number you can call and someone will guide you to the resources you need — everything from providing information on the latest clinical trials to a list of support groups in your local community. Other groups offer similar services. As noted at the beginning of this guide, dealing with cancer is difficult enough, finding help shouldn't be.

### **Giving Back**

Many cancer patients reassess priorities and make deliberate choices about how they want to spend their time after treatment has ended. Survivors often report being driven by an intense passion to give back — to help others as they have been helped. Giving back can take many forms. Volunteering at a treatment center, talking to others who are newly diagnosed, providing transportation to those in need, or becoming involved in raising funds for research or treatment are just a few.

In addition, survivors are often the best advocates for additional research funding or changes in the ways we treat cancer patients. Many local organizations as well as some national ones, (the National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship, the National Patient Advocate Foundation, the American Cancer Society, for example) are always seeking volunteers to help spread the message and hope for a cure. Find what you are passionate about and consider letting your “giving back” be part of your healing process.

Choosing service, no matter how small, provides yet one more treatment option. By serving others through whatever resources are at your disposal, you give additional meaning to your life.

## RESOURCES

### Internet Connections

**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)** – For getting involved in advocacy efforts. [www.acscan.org](http://www.acscan.org)

**Bloch Cancer Foundation** – Founded by a cancer survivor to help new cancer patients have the best chance of survival by providing two free books, various articles and resources for empowering the mind as well as treating the body. [www.blochcancer.org](http://www.blochcancer.org)

**Breastcancer.org** – Helps women and their loved ones make sense of the complex medical and personal information about breast cancer, so they can make the best decisions for their lives. [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

**Cancer Hope** – A resource for people with cancer and their families, offering free one-on-one support with trained volunteers with similar cancer experiences. [www.cancerhopenetwork.org](http://www.cancerhopenetwork.org)

**Imerman Angels** – Imerman Angels carefully matches and individually pairs a person touched by cancer (a cancer fighter, survivor, caregiver, family member, friend) with someone who has fought and survived the same type of cancer (a Mentor Angel). These 1-on-1 relationships inspire hope and offer the chance to ask personal questions and receive support from someone who is uniquely familiar with the experience. The service is absolutely free and helps anyone touched by any type of cancer, at any cancer stage level, at any age, living anywhere in the world. (877) 274-5529; <http://imermanangels.org>

**Mothers' Living Stories Project** – Trained volunteer listeners guide mothers living with cancer in recording their life stories as living legacies for their children. Free. [www.motherslivingstories.org](http://www.motherslivingstories.org)

**National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship** – The oldest survivor-led cancer advocacy organization. [www.canceradvocacy.org/](http://www.canceradvocacy.org/)

### References

**Muller, Wayne** (2010) *A Life of Being, Having and Doing Enough*. This book is a timely and invaluable resource to help us remember what is truly important and meaningful in our lives. It provides the reader a place of solace, sanctuary, reflection, and realignment toward an inherent Way of Being – in the midst of life's busy-ness and fast pace!

**Shrock, Dean** (2000) *Doctor's Orders: Go Fishing* stresses the importance of having a will to live. Details Shrock's experiences and insights gained while teaching his program that strives to extend survival with cancer.

**Von Hoffman, Shirleen** (2005) *The Journey Home: A True Story about Life, Love, Hope, Illness, Passage and Healing*. An inspirational story of a mother's fight for life against a terminal cancer, through the eyes of her daughter.

## CANCER RETREATS

### *East Coast*

**CANCER AS A TURNING POINT** – Five-day residential workshops, based on the work of Larry LeShan, for people with cancer, their families, and anyone who wants more richness, zest and meaning in their lives. NC (704) 332-8394; [www.cancerasaturningpoint.org/](http://www.cancerasaturningpoint.org/)

**CANCER HELP PROGRAM AT SMITH FARM CENTER FOR THE HEALING ARTS** – Designed to serve people seeking physical, emotional and spiritual healing; patterned after Commonweal. Washington, DC; (202) 483-8600; [www.smithfarm.com](http://www.smithfarm.com)

**ECaP (Exceptional Cancer Patients)** – Retreats for cancer patients and survivors focusing on issues related to wellness and coping skills. Developed in collaboration with Bernie Siegel, MD. Meadville, PA; (814) 337-8192; [www.ecap-online.org/](http://www.ecap-online.org/)

**LIFE BEYOND CANCER** – Four-day retreat center for women cancer survivors, social workers, and oncology nurses focusing on issues related to wellness after treatment, and self and community advocacy. Texas; (800) 381-2637; [www.lifebeyondcancer.org](http://www.lifebeyondcancer.org)

### *West Coast*

**CAMP KESEM NATIONAL** – Provides summer camp programs for children who have or had a parent with cancer. Organized and run by university students. (925) 212-9044; [www.campkesem.org](http://www.campkesem.org)

**COMMONWEAL CANCER HELP PROGRAM** – Residential interdisciplinary program and resource center. Helps people seek physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Bolinas, CA; (415) 868-0970; [www.commonweal.org](http://www.commonweal.org)

**FROM CHRYSALIS TO WINGS** – Provides a program called AWOL (A Way Of Life . . . after breast cancer) – a retreat meant to pamper and enrich; including massage, art, writing, t'ai chi, and trust-building exercises. Rancho Santa Margarita, CA; (888) 311-2965; [www.chrysalistowings.com](http://www.chrysalistowings.com)

**HARMONY HILL** – Retreat and Wellness Center offering free weekend retreats for cancer patients and caregivers. Union, WA. (360) 898-2363; [www.harmonyhill.org](http://www.harmonyhill.org)

**HEALING ODYSSEY** – Provides three-day weekend retreat in the Santa Barbara Mountains designed to optimize quality of life for women with all forms of cancer. CA; (949) 951-3930; [www.healingodyssey.org](http://www.healingodyssey.org)

**ME-ONE FOUNDATION** – Provides Camp Challenge in western Sonoma County, CA, a free weekend experience for adult cancer patients and their families; (916) 781-6457; [www.me-onefoundation.org](http://www.me-onefoundation.org)

**SIMONTON CANCER CENTER** – Based on the work of Dr. Simonton, the Center offers educational and psychotherapeutic sessions for cancer patients and their support person. Malibu, CA; (800) 459-3424; [www.simontoncenter.com](http://www.simontoncenter.com)

*General*

**FREE FLY-FISHING RETREATS** for women who have or have had breast cancer. Many locations;  
[www.castingforrecovery.org](http://www.castingforrecovery.org)

**FREE FLY-FISHING RETREATS** for men recovering from all forms of cancer;  
[www.reelrecovery.org](http://www.reelrecovery.org)