THE FEAR OF RECURRENTNESS

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When Active Treatment Ends

- Acknowledge personal strengths
- Deepened relationships
- Excitement about the future
- New desire to set personal goals
- Gratitude and appreciation for life

- Fear
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Emotional numbness
- Uncertainty
- Worry
- Pressure
F E A R  O F  R E C U R R E N C E

- Will cancer come back?
- Will I get a secondary cancer related to my treatments?
- Will I recognize symptoms?
- How will I understand what physical feelings to pay attention to and which to dismiss?
- Am I doing enough?
- Am I overdoing it?
WHY?  WHY?  WHY?  WHY?
**Taking Action #1: Worry = Unanswered Questions**

To begin, can you identify any questions lurking behind your worry and fear? Make a list.

- When is my cancer most likely to recur?
- What are the doctors looking at during follow up visits?
- When should I contact my medical team?
- Did treatment put me at risk for any future health issues? How will those be monitored?
TAKING ACTION #2: GATHERING THE EVIDENCE

Can you balance the “What Ifs” with statements of “What Is”?

- Test results from your most recent follow up
- Acknowledgements of healing (hair growth, regaining strength, more energy)
- The treatment plan you just endured after being diagnosed.
- The lifestyle decisions you make to support your health (diet, exercise, sleep, meditation, etc.)
Control is your best effort to get rid of or problem solve something that is distressing to you.

But what if you can’t control some of your worry or fear? You can’t “Take Action” and do something to calm yourself.

Now what?!?!
'WELL HELLO WORRY…'

- Greet your worry or fear.
- Resist judging your feelings or struggling to “fix” them.
- Allow them some space to just be with you.
- Struggling with the uncontrollable feelings makes it worse.
- Learn to live despite their presence?
Taking Action #3: Feelings Masquerading as Fear.

Are there other feelings alongside your fear?

- Sadness
- Loss
- Anger
- Irritation
- Guilt

How do you tend to these feelings? What do you need?
SELF CARE: SADNESS. ANGER.

- What helps you feel safe enough to be really sad?
  - People?
  - Location?
  - Comforts?

- Pay very close attention to what makes you stop crying? Why?

- Anger is energy. What can you do with that energy?

- Do you know your triggers?

- Have you taken the time to really understand those trigger thoughts?
Realize when you are stressed. Why?
What are those triggers?
Certain people?
External Events?

Begin to learn your “Warning Signs”:
The build up to an emotional moment.

Know your people!
Who is good for you?
Who is challenging?

“Never take someone’s feeling for granted because you never know how much courage that they took to show it to you.”
**STAY IN YOUR LANE**

- Many emotions are influenced by the people around you.
- Hearing variances in treatment plans or follow up care can cause you to second guess your treatment.
- Learning about a celebrity recurrence or diagnosis can trigger complex emotions.
- The set backs (or successes) of fellow survivor friends can trigger concerns about doing cancer “well”.
- **MAKE YOUR CANCER PERSONAL.** This is your diagnosis. Your survivorship. Your story.
Bring it Back to Your Body

- Worry and Fear can be very “head heavy”
- How can you reconnect with your body?
- Breathe
- Change location (sit/stand; inside/outside; lay down/get up)
- Feel your body – touch
- Ground yourself into the…ground. 😊
- Change the pace with breath
A Support “Who’s Who”

- Health Care Professionals
- Peers (other who “get it!”)
- Friends and Family
Be Gentle With Yourself

- Remember your feelings about your cancer experience will likely change day to day.
- Learn how to care for yourself.
- Try not to ignore your need to share your worries, fears and questions.
- Often talking with others helps you work through concerns or uncertainties in a natural way.
- Listen to yourself. Come to understand what you are feeling, thinking and needing.
- Try not to put on a “happy face” if you are not feeling that way. Your true feelings are more helpful to everyone.