

Cancer
as an Opportunity to Change

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About me.

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Cancer Wellness Doctrine

#1

Events have changed my life, but that does not mean my life has been changed for the worse. I will decide how my life has been changed.



#2

While there may be moments of uncertainty, there will always be reasons for hope.



#3

I am the most important member of my health care team. The more active and curious I am about my treatment, the better my outlook will be.



#4

I have the power to
make a difference in
my treatment and
care.

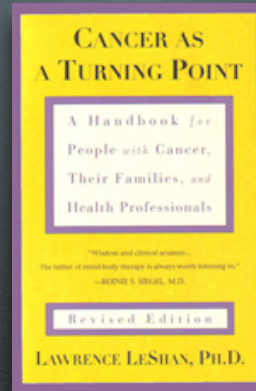


#5

Physical healing is not the only goal of my treatment. I can also use this time to heal my spirit, relationships and heart.



Let's Expand #5:
Cancer is an Opportunity to
Change and Redirect Your Life.



Cancer as a Turning Point
by Lawrence LeShan, Ph.D.

Book by a Therapist for Therapists

- Psychotherapy doesn't work for cancer patients in the way its supposed to.
- Psychotherapy asks "what's wrong with the client?"
- Tends to exaggerate problems

Patients have Enough Problems

- Immune System is fueled by feelings.
- Feelings can tip the balance between recovery and non-recovery.
- What we think affects how we feel.
How we feel affects how we behave.
How we behave affects what happens.

We Need to Help

- In order to help someone living with cancer, you need to strengthen them, not stress them.
- Ask “what is strong about the client?”
- Help them mobilize their strength.
 - By changing what they think about the cancer experience.

Positive Spin to Cancer?

- Get rid of the “life-threatening” language.
- Embrace a “life-changing” language.
- The illness is the doorway to whatever will come next in life.
 - for the patient
 - for the patient’s family

What Comes Next...

- Doesn't have to automatically be bad.
- Cancer treatment is not fun, but in retrospect the time can be remembered as time well spent.
- An opportunity to get a new grip on how life is going.

Caution

- You cannot go “backwards” into the future.
- Do not insist that everything must be exactly the way it was before your diagnosis. That isn't possible.
- You go into the future with a new reality. Realize that, and use it by making something positive of it.

I have never encountered a cancer patient who insisted on “Going Backward into the Future” who had a good outcome.

Core Ideas

- Boundaries



Core Ideas

- Positive Expectation



Core Ideas

- Agency



Core Ideas

- Vision



Expand the “Vision Thing”

- What is your vision for your life? What do you want your life to be all about?
- How’s that working out for you? Are you doing what you wanted to do with your life, or have you gotten off track somehow?

Two Answers

“I’m On Track.”

- Instantiate the Vision with a Praxis.
- That is, set up a marker. Do something that makes a statement about who you are.
- Doing something special sends a positive message to the deeper mind.

"Here I raise mine Ebenezer..."

- Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah, and named it Ebenezer; for he said, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel; the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The towns that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.
(1 Samuel 7:12-14 NRSV)

Praxis Examples

- car
- style of dress/jewelry
- how you spell your name
- special paperweight
- particular activity

“I’m Off Track.”

- The time of your cancer treatment and its aftermath is a great time to reach forward and get a new grip.
- Make a Second Journey

Second Journey

- Not a mid-life crisis.
- Doesn't mean you were mistaken
- It just means you want something new.
- Been there, done that...want something different now.

Self-Reinvention

- Cancer is a disease we project our cultural fears onto.
- In ancient cultures, a major illness was the “initiation” needed to become a shaman; a person of deeper spirit.
- You’ve got everyone scared anyway, so you can probably get away with almost anything.

Usually Change is Hard

- Relationship Homeostasis
- “Change Back Maneuvers”
- The Mind’s Critical Factor
- Change is hard because other people don’t want us to change.

Cancer is Different

- Other people are so shaken by your cancer that you will never again have as good an opportunity to make a fundamental change in your life, free of the “change-back” maneuvering of others.

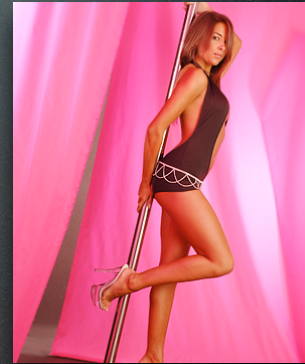
Example

- VP Marketing, IBM
- Custom Gunsmith



Example

- Assistant VP
Ambulatory Services
- Shasha...



Example

- Accountant
- Poetry on Lulu.com



Example

- Sales Manager
- Wanted to be chef
- Teaches cooking classes in his home for congregation members.



Have in Common

- All beat the odds of their disease.
- These people all reached out and got a better grip on their lives.
- Changed how they thought about themselves, which changed how they felt about themselves, which changed how they behaved, which changed what happened.

Blueprint Theory

- The Unconscious Mind contains an image of who we were created to be.
- The degree to which we fulfill that image is the degree to which we feel happy and strong.

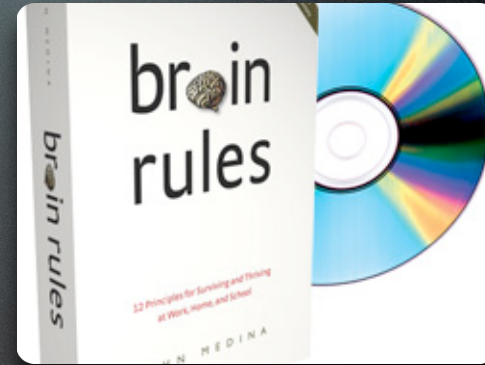
The Personal Legend

- Paulo Coelho
 - Favorability
 - Testing
 - Victory

How the Brain Works

Great Book

- Brain Rules by John Medina



Breakpoint 1960

- Direct-Observation, Live-Brain research became illegal.
- Since then, we've only been able to use imaging technology.
 - fMRI (blood flow and O₂ in brain)
 - PET (positron emission tomography)
 - SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography)

SPECT

- Cheaper and more widely available
 - SPECT uses technetium-99m, which every hospital gets weekly.
 - Most hospitals have a SPECT.
 - PET requires Fluorodeoxyglucose (110 minute half-life)

Kindling

- Every nerve cell can pick up and hold a slight positive charge.
- Networks of such nerve cells are said to be “kindled.”
- Common thoughts, feelings and behaviors etch themselves into our brain as networks of kindled nerves.

Old Dogs

- Frequently enacted behaviors, or frequently felt feelings, or frequently thought thoughts have “staying power” in our brains.
- So it’s harder to teach old dogs new tricks because they have kindled brains and work is needed to overcome that.

Eric Kandel

- 2000 Nobel Prize
- When people learn, the actual wiring of the brain changes.
- More than just kindling, the nerves actually split, sway, swell and form new patterns.
- If the kindling isn't getting enough reinforcement, the nerve cells look elsewhere for their fun.

The Brain Keeps Changing

- Within a few years of birth, even identical twins have different brains.
- The Jennifer Aniston and Halle Berry nerves.

Different Kinds of Nerves

- Experience Independent Wiring: the same for everyone; govern breathing, heartbeat, etc.
- Experience Dependent Wiring: this changes on basis of kindling

We Have Unique Brains

- Our brains keep changing on the basis of what we pay attention to.
- However, our attention plays tricks on us.

How Many F's?

- FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY YEARS

There are 6 Fs.

- **F**inished **F**iles are the result of **F** years of **F** scientific study combined with the experience of **F** many years.
- People usually see 3 Fs. We tend not to notice the “F” in “of” because we pronounce it “ov.”
- Expectation controls attention.

Remember

- Our brains keep changing on the basis of what we pay attention to.
- BUT...what we attend to is affected by what we expect.
- What you expect changes your brain.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

- If you expect to be a failure, your brain will change to maximize your chances of failure.
- If you expect to die, your brain will change to help you die right on schedule.
- If you expect to do well...

The Message

You Have an Opportunity

- Never again in your life will it be as easy for you to change something fundamental about yourself.
- The people around you are emotionally stunned. Their Critical Factor is mostly off-line.
- Choose to pay attention to what makes you happy and strong.

Pay Attention

- By paying attention to what makes you happy and strong, you change what gets kindled in your brain.
- Your brain will then change so you notice even more of what makes you happy and strong.

What you Notice

- What you notice changes what you can think most easily. That changes what you feel. That changes what you do.
- The more you re-invent yourself the easier it becomes.
- Eventually you no longer are “re-inventing” yourself. You’ve become it. Your brain has changed and it’s really who you are.

Happy and Strong

- Happy and Strong people have immune systems that help them the most.
- It's not magic. But you will do better than if you were less happy and strong.

What Makes You
Happy and Strong?

What Can You Change
So You Are More
Happy?

How Can Your Illness Become a
Positive Doorway to Whatever
Comes Next?

How Can You Reshape Your Life
So That It Better Reflects Your
Dreams?

The Fairy Godmother

- If you had a FG who would make the external circumstances of your life anything you wanted, provided it was different from what had gone before, what would you want?
- Is there a way you can get a part of that now?

The Fairy Godmother

- If you had a FG would would make the internal circumstances of your life anything you wanted, what would you want?
- What's keeping you from doing that now?

Your Mind Awaits.
It will transform itself to help
you, once you tell it what to
expect.

Thank You