

Kicking Cancer's Ass ~ Christine's story

In the relatively short time I have spent seeking, studying and sharing information pertaining to cancer, cancer treatments and cancer politics, one vital element had always remained missing for me until last year.

I had read numerous testimonials and heard about "miracle" cases in which people who were supposed to die were cured of cancer. What many of the old herbalists and "alternative" practitioners said, wrote, did and taught made sense to me inside, and I surely had more reason to put my genuine faith in their claims than in the claims of modern experts who get rich while telling their patients to go home and give up.

From all that I have learned and from the power in my heart and spirit I have long believed that problems and diseases dubbed unsolvable and incurable may only be unsolvable and incurable because of the limitations and mankinds straps to his own innate energies.

And so I would share all my findings and accumulated information regarding cancer with anyone I heard of who was suffering from the dreaded illness. I hoped that somewhere in something I was giving them they would find their own hope and their own inspiration and their own answers toward kicking cancer's ass and becoming well again. Because somehow I believed they could.

Yet I had never personally met nor had befriended directly on purpose or by chance anyone who had actually beaten cancer themselves and educated me in totality about their own experience. Until I met Christine.

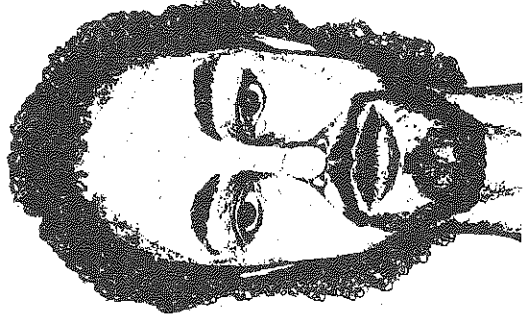
To me Christine is special because together we are experiencing the miracle of friendship. But she is special even beyond that for the purpose of this series on cancer and health and healing because here also she is a living miracle. She kicked cancer's ass.

Against the wisdom and predictions and prophecies of the omnipotent ones, Christine is a walking, talking testament that miracles do happen.

And perhaps if we all took more time to believe in things worth believing in, and caring more about each other, and putting more stock in love and the positive powers residing within us, such miracles might become more commonplace. And they wouldn't have to be referred to as miracles any longer.

Perhaps the simple art of communicating and sharing information, knowledge and stories openly and freely would lead to more cures, more laughter and happier lives for all. Or perhaps we have been too long bred on the theory that everything is better when medicine, media and government becomes so centralized and in-

Ron McEntee
Publisher



tertwined that we need never worry about thinking for ourselves anymore on matters even of life and death.

The underlying theme in this series on kicking cancer's ass echoes the fundamental philosophies behind this very newspaper's creation and continued existence: That simple communication may lead to understanding which may lead to love, which in the end melts down fear and ignorance and anger and benefits everyone.

Thank you Christine, for sharing your loving friendship, and for caring so much about others to offer your love through this publication.

3rd in a series on
cancer and health
and healing.

In previous segments:

Especially for those who have been told to go home and die by self-appointed omnipotent medical experts, or who have loved ones being told there is no hope to become healthy again, *Active Voice* Publisher Ron McEntee began his series on cancer:

"...One thing I do believe with all my heart is that fear is itself afraid of love. Fear will run from love because it will be destroyed by it. And the first step of being destroyed by cancer is to allow fear to pervade rather than love, and to allow hope to be exterminated rather than nurtured so that it can blossom and grow and bear fruit and heal..."

Part Two of "Kicking Cancer's Ass" included McEntee's emphasis on "The power within" along with a story concerning the history of Essiac called "Ojibwa Herbal Tea: Indian myth or healing remedy?"

Future segments of this series will cover past and present healers and healing methods which have been rendered subservient and unnecessary by the mainstream media and medical establishments.

Also included here will be your stories, comments and questions. Please take part and join a genuine effort to let the healing begin.

For copies of previous segments of this series, contact *Active Voice* at 440/243-4547; or write P.O. Box 394, Berea, OH 44017; or computer at ActiveComm@aol.com

Don't eat the yellow snow - I did and look what happened

Christine Mizen, Euclid, Ohio

Sometimes I wonder if it really happened to me. I remember thinking this before, when it was really happening. Now, I have the scars that are always there to remind me. When I look at them, I know that it did happen.

I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease when I was 17-years-old and about to start my senior year of high school. At this point in my young life, I was convinced that life was a crock. I was miserable. I could never see past tomorrow. I was the epitome of angst ridden youth. Emotionally I felt like a goober and physically, like a 70-year-old. Sure, I had some fun times, but deep inside, I knew that there was something wrong with me.

I was always so cold and tired. I had this biology teacher who let me sit on the heater in his classroom. I would lean up against the window, as my butt was burning off, trying to maintain a look of interest so I would not piss off this teacher and lose my position of warmth. Bless you, Mr. Goglin.

I can recall looking in the bathroom

mirror before class, acknowledging this huge lump on my throat, and yet still shrugging it off. Nothing could have possibly been wrong with me; I was a teenager full of piss and vinegar. I was more concerned with my hair. I was either cutting it off or growing it in.

I believed that your face could look like hell but your hair could redeem you. I was always so tired that I would stay in bed those extra few minutes. Those minutes were heaven but I always left time to fix my hair. As I have said, it had been the most important aspect of my shallow youth.

Finally, a guy from my brother's frat house said I should really get my lump checked out. It had grown larger and was very noticeable. I was still ignoring it and thinking it would go away. Guess what, it didn't. I ended up with the diagnosis of a goiter. I was treated with thyroid medicine for a year before I sought a second opinion. I am so glad I did.

I will never forget the day I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease. I went in for

the results for the zillions of tests I had been through. I sat in the office waiting for over two hours. My doctor was running late, but did not want me to reschedule. This would have clues anyone else in, but of course, I was not anyone else.

I was reading a magazine. When the doctor arrived, he sat down and said, "Kiddo, you have cancer." The word echoed in my head and I just sat there registering what he had just said. When it did, I nearly wet my pants.

All of a sudden, I snapped out of my daze. I don't know where I found the strength but I did. "Okay," I said. "What do I have to do?"

I left the office in a numb tough girl mode and went straight to Taco Bell, the video store and the gas station. I bought a load of junk food, George Carlin videos and two packs of cigarettes. Hey, if this was how it was going to be, I might as well live it up.

The first treatment was terrifying. I had no idea what to expect. No one had let me in on any of the secrets. I had browsed through

a book on chemotherapy, but for the most part I was on my own. After the first week my golden locks were still there. I thought that maybe I was one of those lucky people you hear of who don't lose their hair.

I knew that I might lose my hair later on, so I went out and bought some outrageous red hair dye. I was rebelling in any way I could. Of course the dye did not work due to all the chemicals in the therapy. I had wasted my money and any hopes of being a red head.

I had chemotherapy treatments every other week. After a couple of rounds, my hair started to get all rubbery. The texture was like spongy plastic. Every time I washed it or brushed it, bits would fall out. After awhile, I stopped messing with it. I needed my crowning glory for all it was worth. I ended up looking like Pigpen from the Charlie Brown cartoon.

Around this time I developed a blood clot in my heart. This was dangerous stuff. The clot was the size of a golf ball and it was

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Christine's story (from page 3)

swinging back and forth, waiting to drop and get caught in the valve of my heart. When it was detected I was rushed to the intensive care unit. I had left the house without my magazines or books, so I was bored out of my skin. Everyone in this unit was in a coma and the nurses were no fun at all.

I tried to be as sweet as my teen years would allow and begged for a television. I won them over, but of course they had forgotten the remote and you know how high those televisions are in the hospital. I was constantly being monitored and I was not allowed to move, let alone get up to use the potty. I don't know about you, but this was a huge dilemma for me. I swore I would hold it until I was set free, for there was not any way this tough girl was going in a bedpan.

Under these circumstances and with the channel of my wondrous television set stuck on some kind of idiotic show, I was not in the mood. I had just had an argument with this insipid doctor that knew diddly about

how to deal with an obnoxious youth. He had insisted on poking my veins with no avail. By this time, I felt like an old pro at this cancer stuff. I kept telling him to let me have a hot rag to put on my veins to help the blood flow. Then, instead of all the pain he was giving me, he would get a good vein to inject whatever he wanted. Well, the idiot would not listen to me.

After many failed tries, he finally listened to me. I got my revenge on him later. He was the doctor that had the honor of sticking his fingers up my butt to check for internal bleeding. If you think I made this easy for him, then you have not figured me out yet.

So, here I am, with IVs in both arms, watching this stupid show on the tube. After all that had transpired this night, I was not about to take this inhumanity. What was I supposed to do, lay there and look at the ceiling and contemplate my life? I think not. I decided to get creative. I scooted to the edge of my bed and turned the channels with my big toe. Every time I did this, I would flash the nurses' station right across my glass bubble of a room.

By this I mean that my room was one big window and for good reason, I was not wearing panties under my gown. Do you know how hard it is to pick a wedgy with both your arms filled with IVs? I reveled in the outside shock every time I changed the channel, and to be sure, I was never satisfied with what was on.

For the most part, people did not know how to handle me. They never did know how to handle me, anyway. My brothers were the worst. They really had a hard time watching their baby sister endure this horrible mess. They basically avoided me. This blood clot sent them into a panic. They knew they had to visit me in the intensive care unit.

The best part of all this drama surrounding me was when my oldest brother came to see me. It was my second day in the unit and I was not in my most pleasant frame of mind. By this time, I had decided to call a truce with the bedpan. Every time I had the courage to pee in the pan, at least five doctors would waltz into my room, clipboards in hand. Whenever this happened, I got the inevitable stage fright. So, I was up to my eyeballs in it and I was not a person to tangle with.

My brother came into the room looking like he could bolt at any moment. He sat down in a chair facing me and tried not to look at my sparse head of hair. I tried to make him feel more comfortable by joking about my lost tresses. I said, "Hey, at least I have more than you!" I then picked up a hunk from my head and it promptly fell out, right in my hand.

I swear, he looked like he was going to faint. I laughed so hard that I pulled off some of the apparatus that was hooked to the monitor from my chest. This was a disaster. Due to the unhitching, the machine went haywire and flat-lined. All these buzzers started going off and nurses and doctors came running in. I was having the time of my life. You should have seen the look on my brother's face, it was classic.

Finally, I was released from my little glass prison. I went home with cropped hair. It was easier to manage it this way. Every time I moved it would fall out. I had to keep the windows shut in the car. My hair kept blowing off and out the window. I was so happy to go home.

When I arrived, my three best friends were waiting for me. These darlings made

me aware that I had to deal with my hair. We decided to visit the local barber and have him shave it off completely. When we got there, I told the guy to shave it off and don't dare ask why. I proceeded to turn my chair away from the mirror and watched the last of my mane fall to the floor. I did not even look when he was finished. I just got up and went home with my friends.

It took a long time for me to take a peek at my appearance. I had convinced myself that my new shiny head was in vogue. The time came when I did catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror. I will never forget the feeling of my insides sinking down at the realization of my dreadful appearance.

Besides my dazzling bald head, I had begun to show the effects of prednisone in my body. I had gained 60 pounds and acquired a moon face without the benefit of eyebrows or eyelashes. You would think that at least my hair on my legs would have fallen out. Think again, it grew like weeds. I looked like a freak and needed a shave.

Throughout my trauma, I was numb. I just kept on keeping on. There was nothing else I could do. I bought a baseball hat with a naughty word on it and dealt with the loss of my hair the best way I could. I even went to a Sinead O'Connor concert. I needed to be with my kind - ha; I was made fun of twice. Those morons thought I was trying to imitate their leader.

I went home from the show, downcast and sullen. To top off the whole brilliant night of fools and music, I took a shower and watched my pubic hair fall down the drain. It was then and there that I fully realized what was actually happening. For the very first time, my defenses melted and I cried my eyes out.

My lovely high school was more than a bit sheltered: something like a student getting cancer was unheard of. I was the talk of my school. No one would ask me about my illness and even though I was not in school, I heard of all the gossip. I had people from my class, that I was not even acquaintances with, just stop over once to see "the girl with cancer." I felt like a one-woman sideshow anyway and this just added to it.

Even my best friend in the whole world could not deal with my illness. It took her over six months to come around to say hello. I was out of school and alone in my senior year. This year was what everyone had dreamed about since they were lowly freshmen. I was supposed to be going to parties, dances and prom. In any event, I was not having the time of my life.

I was home-tutored for most of the school year and had zero social life. Though I was not the type to really hit the dances, I was ill and really felt the need to experience some semblance of normalcy. I certainly could not get a date for any of the dances, so when my friend got her wits about her and came for a visit, she took me to the mall. We were going to the dances no matter what, thank you Jen.

We went looking for a dress and I became so tired that she had to get me into a wheelchair. Wouldn't you know it, the most popular group of boys came walking straight towards us as she wheeled me along. Can you believe that they had the nerve to cross over to the opposite side, carefully as not to make eye contact with me? These guys knew me but chose not to talk or even look at me.

I did get to go to the dances. My brother and Jen had asked their friends to escort me as a favor. Of course, at the dances, everyone kept their distance from the sick girl.

Do I sound bitter?

Boys were the only things on my mind, besides my failing appearance. Unfortunately, when you look like I did, you really have no hope at meeting guys. Sorry, but this is the truth. As I pined over love and the lack of it, I wrote this terrible poetry, wishfully thinking about the one guy who could see through this mask and what? You guessed it, help me rid myself of my dreadful virginity. I never really dwelled on whether I would die, but I sure hoped I got to do it before then. It's funny how the mind works. No, I never acted on these musings, but I thought about it a whole lot.

There was this hunk of burning love that lived across the hall from me. I thought he was just divine. I would watch him when he was in the parking lot, daydreaming mercifully. He was always so kind to me, the sick girl. I was so taken by him. Years later I ran into him at a bar. I was back to normal, whatever that means after my ordeal.

He was across the bar and he kept looking at me with unsure acknowledgment. I finally got the nerve to go over and tell him who I was. This went over very well. He was all over me and I was laughing on the inside. If he even knew what got me through that night. Before I left him at the bar, I thought to myself, "See, you got through it." And so will you. All you need is a little angst and a lot of attitude.

I was very lucky that I had such a marvelous support team such as my friends: John, with his kind eyes and books; Barry, with his humor and music; Jen, with her disregard for my limitations; and finally Hope, with her smothering, mothering, and unconditional love.

In addition to these angels I would like to thank my mother and father for doing the best they could; my brothers Eric and Rob and their respective families for teaching me the hard way; my cat Sara for her warmth on the very cold nights; my grandmother for babysitting me when times were bad; Matt Fox, Dave Calgrove and Buckeye White for taking me to the dances; Tom June for healing my aches and pains, Mr. Goglin for letting me sit on the heater in his biology class; Carol, Andrew, and Eric Ertley for their fabulous foods; Aunt Linda, Loretta and Grandma Mizen for their trio of strength; Vecchio Sensei for encouraging me to become what I am; and last but not least, Barbara Douglass, for helping piece my health back together and guiding me to the lighter side.

Everyone in my life at this period owns my heart. I will never forget the strength of everyone who put up with my frustrations and temper. If I have never thanked you properly, here it is. Without you, I would never have made it.

To be honest with you, it was never easy. It does hurt, emotionally and physically. Through it all, I must say, I learned about life the hard way. No one ever said life was fair and this is the truth. The lessons I learned through "thecanceryears" are etched into my soul like a slow moving film.

I could tell you all that crap about, "What does not make you stronger...", but that old cliché will not make you feel any better if you have to go through this hell.

I can tell you just this. I am neither perfect nor superhuman, yet I made it. This is reality. I now understand the power of will. Whatever you desire in your hands, but my angels, you must want it.

Do you want to live through this? Well, then do it and come and tell me all about it. I will be waiting.