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## HEALTH

### Life after cancer

🕒 Thursday, Dec 14 2017    👤 Karina Godwin



***[Karina Godwin \(http://www.karinagodwin.com\)](http://www.karinagodwin.com) is considered by many as one of the most gifted healers of our times with an international clientele. She mastered significant life change due to trauma and most recently after facing a highly aggressive and rare cancer.***

#### ***[The day I was diagnosed with cancer](http://www.oversixty.com.au/health/caring/2017/11/how-i-decided-that-cancer-was-not-my-enemy/)***

*[\(http://www.oversixty.com.au/health/caring/2017/11/how-i-decided-that-cancer-was-not-my-enemy/\)](http://www.oversixty.com.au/health/caring/2017/11/how-i-decided-that-cancer-was-not-my-enemy/) was the worst day of my life, but also the best. It was a big wake up call, and from all accounts it was way overdue.*

My life had become unhealthy, so here I was with a tumour the size of a small football in my abdomen of a very rare and aggressive cancer. I was forty-seven and things weren't looking great as the odds stacked against me.

I looked at all of my options (and there weren't many), and chose what felt best for me. I chose to combine energy healing with surgery and lifestyle changes. A month of serious complications following surgery, unable to eat, left me weak and fragile. I was ever so happy to finally be discharged home away from all of those needles!

During my fifteen years of nursing, I did what I had been taught to do with patients

who had successfully completed medical or surgical treatment or intervention for their cancer. I congratulated them for their bravery and their success and gave diagnosis or treatment-specific discharge directions. But, having been through cancer, I wish I had told them more, that this was just the beginning...

Diagnosis, surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and all of the other treatments out there all come at a cost. Ideally, you end up alive but the toll it takes is often unexpected. Your body is weakened beyond measure, but worse still is the damage that it does to your Spirit. I came home worn out and emotional. It was only then that the reality started to sink in...

I was hit by the thought that my body had failed me, and I felt betrayed.

Yet, had my body failed me or had I failed my body? With so many cancer diagnoses prevalent in our society, it became clear to me that we are living in a way that does not support our body well enough to protect itself from disease. After I sat in the grief of my recovery, of my diagnosis and of the difficulties of everything that had happened to me, I realised and felt such incredible joy for being alive. I was fortunate to have the support of my team of healers, but often you need to talk to someone like a counsellor or support group to feel better. I started to feel safe again.

I started to look at my life up until diagnosis and realised that whilst I had been doing so much right, there had been periods of time that had been incredibly damaging. I realised that the stress of my business which I had opened just before the Global Financial Crisis was a big factor in the things that weren't going so well. I had stopped sleeping well and struggled to go to sleep and this pattern had continued. I woke up tired every day and was hardly enthusiastic to exercise, nor did I have the energy. I was too tired to meditate often, and this tiredness extended to cooking well. I resorted to eating out and used takeaway to support my overcommitted lifestyle. I was giving so much to everyone else, that I had little time, energy or inclination to give to me.

After I returned home from hospital, I knew things had to be different, so I started making changes to everything. I took time out for me, and I started saying no, and nobody died from me doing it! After years of giving to everyone else at the expense of my own needs or wellbeing, I was finally beginning to realise that I had it wrong. I thought I was necessary or that there would be disasters if I didn't help people. I was also raised to be kind-hearted and generous and was happy to give my time or effort to help out. My overpleasing had made me exhausted and combined with the sleep deprivation, had starved my body of what it needed to fuel, repair, and rejuvenate my body and mind.

I chose to meditate every day, to feed my body fresh, healthy food and water, to sleep and exercise more and to avoid the toxins that lurk in our food and environment. I started to evaluate my day each evening, to identify where I had given to me and where I had given to others. I started to understand the giving and receiving balance had been badly out of whack and that I needed to be careful of it every day. When I'm asked to do something now, whether it's to help out or something social or for work, I take the time to see if it honours me to do so. Often I'm surprised to see that it doesn't and I then say no.

Surviving cancer in the beginning is really only the beginning. I wish that I'd told my patients that as a nurse. I wish I could have given them reassurance and the heads up that fear was an even greater challenge. Every day I would fight the fears of survival, of the cancer returning, raised by every niggles in my body. Previously I had kind of cruised through life, yet now with the knowledge that my cancer had a high

likelihood of returning, I was ultra-aware of every pain or movement in my body. The arrival of any new symptom (or an old one) would have me worrying I had cancer again, so I created a plan. I'm so much better with a plan: I use them to take away the impact of my overactive imagination. Here it is:

1. Every result that tells me that I am cancer-free is celebrated.
2. I buy myself a treat every time I have a follow-up scan to ensure I have something to look forward to.
3. I meditate every day in the days leading up to a scan, and in the days between it and my Doctor's appointment to help me stay peaceful.
4. I remind myself that the results are already there and I can't change them by worrying and that the scan/blood test is there to help me be proactive with my care.
5. I remind myself that being peaceful now will better prepare me to cope if there is bad news, or to celebrate the good news.
6. We celebrate every time there is good news to keep my attitude positive.
7. I breathe into any fear that arises to take away the power it has over me. I imagine that my breath can bypass the limits of the lungs and use it to destroy or to dissolve my fear.
8. I take a hold of my imagination and give it plenty to do so that it isn't coming up with negative scenarios.
9. I talk to someone close or trusted when I'm frightened. Sharing helps me to stay calm.
10. I give myself permission to fall apart when I need to, but I have a time limit on my suffering. When that time is up, I force myself to look for other ways to manage my situation.
11. I remember that every day that I have survived gives me another day to become or to stay healthy. I am alive and am happy to sing it from the rooftops – I'm not sure my neighbours love it though!
12. I remind myself that people can't help me even if they're willing to if they don't know I need it. I ask for help!

Cancer is a journey you'd never wish upon anyone. I wish that everyone would realise that making changes now might just create a healthy life always. Surviving cancer can be just as tough afterward as it was during treatment, unless we look to support ourselves with kindness and acceptance. I can't change the fact I had cancer and its presence will live with me through every check-up, but I'm sure not going to give it every day in between. I've learnt the hard way that life is precious and I'm making sure that my days focus upon me being healthy and happy, of deleting my fear and embracing every opportunity to make my life the one I dreamed of. I survived for a reason and I'm making sure that it's worth it!