

# THE JOURNEY IS YOURS

You hear the diagnosis of cancer and your journey begins! Some cancer patients take that first step feeling fearful while others maintain a positive attitude. Patients may feel hopeful that this is just a temporary setback on life's journey, while others may fear their journey may end too soon. Some feel the need to research their type of cancer and treatments available while others depend only on the guidance of their doctor. Individuals enter the cancer journey with their own wants and needs. Some may want to talk about their cancer and what they are feeling, while others may not want to discuss it with others. Most patients want support, but that can vary greatly depending on their specific needs. While desiring the support and empathy from all of their family and friends, others may ask only that they share distractions through humorous photos and videos. Patients may be encouraged by hearing other cancer survivors' stories while some may not find that helpful. The truth is that no matter what our age or type of cancer, the journey is ours and it is important that we communicate as clearly as we can with our supporters, what they can do to be of the greatest help to us.

As a cancer survivor of many years, I have seen how different our journey may be from another cancer patient. I have learned that what helped me through my cancer journey – may or may not be helpful for another cancer patient. When I look back at the beginning of my journey, I remember that nothing seemed humorous to me and I wondered if I would feel happy again. I found it helpful to talk about my fears with family and friends, as it made me feel less alone on my journey. However, I also knew others who did not want to talk about cancer or their fears. For them, reactions of sympathy or pity from family and friends was not helpful, but instead, requested their support by sharing humor and funny videos, pictures, etc. This request was not in denial of cancer, but was their way of coping and choosing their own path through. They did not want to follow someone else's path through cancer, but desired to write their own cancer story.

A valuable lesson we can learn, is that what kind of support may help us, may not be the kind of support that will bring encouragement to someone else going through cancer. Realizing that it is their cancer journey and their story to write, we become better supporters as we acknowledge and encourage the cancer patient to choose their own way and discover their own path as we honor their choices along the way.



## MY STORY

We each must walk life's journey through...  
My journey's not the same as you.  
I'll face each challenge – carve my path...  
Determined still to smile and laugh.

I choose to follow victory's way...  
Where hope brings light to cloudy days.  
Our circumstances are unique...  
It's love and joy-filled days I seek.

So if you wish to walk with me...  
I seek no pity – laughter, please!  
Family, friends and happy times...  
All heal my body, soul and mind.

My story is just mine to write...  
And laughter's how I choose to fight!  
My faith – love, joy and hope define...  
I'll win this fight – the Victory's mine!

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(Dedicated to Holly Collins & those who share love, humor, smiles & laughter on life's journey.)

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“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine...” Prov. 17:22 (KJV)