

The Treatable and Beatable Mindset

by Carolyn Gross

How do you respond when life throws you a crisis like cancer, are you poised and prepared or do you feel like you just woke up in your worst nightmare? There is so much fear swirling around a cancer diagnosis, the opportunities for growth never stop. Do you let all the tests and procedures for blood work, MRI and self-examinations fill your brain on a full-time basis? Is there a 24/7 ticker tape in your mind with a non-stop message saying “what if I get cancer” or “what if ‘it’ came back?”

In my “past life” as a CranioSacral therapist, I studied holistic health for over two decades and assisted people with chronic neck, shoulder and back pain. Often, I found the solutions to their problems involved emotional issues combined with the challenges of work/life balance. I would often tell my clients about *chaos the great teacher*, because it is during these unexpected crisis moments in our lives that we can display our creative best, as we rise up to meet the challenge. During these times we often shine the most!

I had a mantra I would say repeatedly, to those in pain with TMJ, neck stiffness or discs rubbing together. In many cases they would go to visit their doctors and often the solution from the medical expert would be a surgical procedure. As I would help ease symptoms of pain, I would say to my clients, *make surgery your last resort*, before they walked out the door. After all, surgery is a permanent solution to what could be a temporary problem! I didn’t dream up this clever saying, it was just something that naturally flowed from my being.

It was after September 11th when I was doing a book tour for my first book, *Staying Calm in the Midst of Chaos*, that I realized I’d lost my enthusiasm and love for my work. Wondering why I was so fatigued; it was then that I found the lump in my left breast. After waiting six weeks from lump discovery to needle biopsy, I called to get the results before my appointment with the surgeon. Knowing I had cancer prior to the doctor’s visit, but not the stage or specifics, the long-awaited day came to meet with the surgeon.

As he looked up at me with my file in his hands, he scolded me, “You should have had been on my table two years ago! This is an advanced stage breast cancer. At this point even with a complete mastectomy, there are no guarantees.” He addressed me like I had been ignoring my health, which was not the case. Both my grandmothers had breast cancer, so I did get my annual mammograms, holistic health coach or not. The mammography unfortunately did not detect the mass at an earlier stage. My prompt reply to him was, “I’ll get back with you!”

This is where the treatable and beatable mindset started in me. After the appointment with the surgeon, I came home, took off my shirt and stared at my breasts in the mirror. Sure, enough that mantra came into my mind, *make surgery your last resort*. I did get second and third opinions, both stating the surgeon’s advice. I felt I had to research and see if there was something I could do first, to make surgery my last resort. My research led me to a viable method called immunotherapy with a customized cancer vaccine that educated my own immune system on how to destroy the cancer. This method, combined with chemotherapy and radiation, worked for me. I healed stage three breast cancer without any surgery and I’ve been cancer free now for four years.

As a writer, I documented my healing journey and discovered within me two ways to respond to my fears and concerns as I went through this cutting-edge treatment. I could be terrorized and filled with fear or I could rise above the insecurities with what I call *the treatable and beatable mindset*. With



the treatable and beatable state of consciousness, no matter what treatment option you choose, you embrace the idea of rising above the chaos of the disease to enhance the healing process. From years of counseling others, I've noticed the vibration of fear doesn't align with the vibration of healing. The idea of a treatable and beatable healing mindset is to keep your focus on the desired results. And stay focused, no matter what obstacles you have to face, in rebuilding your health. Just because I chose immunotherapy doesn't mean it's right for you. The treatable and beatable mindset is about making the choices that make you feel most powerful and healthy. So here are some ideas to strengthen your healing process, so you can successfully recover from cancer.

#1 CLAIM YOUR POWER

Claim your power by becoming part of the decision-making team immediately. Do find your voice and speak your mind. Sometimes doctors go into battle with the cancer and throw the entire arsenal at the disease. Remember it's your body that is the battlefield and you will have to live with the aftermath of treatment the rest of your life. If something seems too extreme for you, ask about other options or studies, and the side effects. Realize you have choices from the moment you are diagnosed. Does your doctor usher in hope and healing or fright and despair? Choose your team wisely, you will be spending time together and you want it to be positive.

#2 KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Who do you know who has been diagnosed with breast cancer? This is likely your first phone call. Ask your friends, children or spouse to do internet research. Prepare yourself, before you say yes to the first suggested plan of treatment. Websites like ADJUVANT! give the latest information on drug side effects. In working with my doctor who had been doing cancer vaccines for twenty years, he assured me this method was effective for all stages of cancer.

I also kept tabs on my body and the impact of medications. For me, the side effects of Tamoxifen were something I couldn't imagine enduring for five years. I asked my doctor after one year, could we find another option here? We worked together and slowly reduced the number of times I took this pill each week. As I reduced the Tamoxifen, I replaced it with a more natural hormone blocker called the Protective Breast Formula from Enzymatic Therapy. The end result was I began to increase my exercise, the joint pain lessened and my weight got back to a normal range.

#3 KNOW YOURSELF

I learned more about myself in the four years of healing cancer than I did decades before. Again, it is the lessons of *chaos the great teacher*. We can truly learn who we are if we go deep --like scuba divers-- and explore the depths of the ocean within. We just might run into the treasure of our lives. Have you found this to be true? I invite you to do some of your own exploration as part of your cancer recovery. Perhaps there are facets of yourself you've never had the courage to express. Dive deep past your fears. Let cancer be the wake-up call to get you moving in the direction of your dreams. Is your dream a closer relationship with family, starting a business or writing your first novel? Whatever it is—go forth boldly.

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