

Recovering From Cancer Treatment

By Gayle North

Candice came into my office several years ago looking like the perfect picture of a healthy fifty-one year old woman. She said she hikes and swims and bicycles, and engages in several competitive sports.

Her story unfolded as she began to tell me about her life threatening five year adventure with cancer that included multiple surgeries, radiation, and chemo that left her with lasting physical and emotional after effects. I began to understand why she came here to create some positive changes in her life. Because despite clean check ups for several years, the most recent just two weeks prior to her visit with me, she was still riddled with fear of a return of the cancer to the point that any little twinge of a physical sensation in her body triggered this fear – and this happened on almost an hourly basis - like there was an enemy lurking that could rob her of life itself.

As I look over her emotional inventory form, I noticed that she had checked; invalidated; misunderstood; unsupported; hurt; cheated. These were feelings related to her relationships. She went on to tell me that she looked healthy after the treatment so family members just assumed that she could pick up life as usual. They did not understand the continuing physical and emotional challenges she was dealing with.

Powerless, anxious, isolated, out of control, and lost and alone were also checked. Add to this list, self critical, disorganized, stuck, sad, apprehensive about the future, and depressed even though she was taking an anti-depressant. The only people who seemed to understand her, were other cancer survivors who were going through the same experience themselves. They talked about it a lot, but there seemed to be no relief and so they just hoped that time would help it to go away.

Candice's way of dealing with it all was to keep herself busy with work and athletic activities to convince herself that she was strong and healthy. Even though she achieved a high level of fitness and found some relief in these activities, the emotions still haunted her. She had endured a horrific trauma during which she didn't know if she would live or die and she had not been able to get her peace and joy back.

After just a few sessions, Candice began to feel some peace returning and days and weeks would go by without a thought of the "enemy". Life became lighter and brighter and much more enjoyable as the weeks passed until one day she said that she was her old self again – even happier than her old self.

Since Candice, there have been other cancer survivors who describe very similar experiences gripping them for years after treatment.

The experience of cancer treatment is very similar to a war experience and we can use trauma release methods to begin to bring balance, peace, and joy back so that the precious life that was the point of the battle, can truly be enjoyed after treatment.

Gayle North offers Personal Coaching for Positive Change using recently developed empowerment technologies to clear mental and emotional blocks that keep people stuck in unhealthy habits and prevent them from performing at their highest potential in school, sports, relationships, work and

finance. Call 406-837-1214 to learn how you can STOP SMOKING IN ONE HOUR and for coaching in person or by phone.

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