

User Manual: Taking Control

User manuals help you to take control:

- ✓ Tell you how things work.
- ✓ Tell you how to troubleshoot problems.

Let this Facing Cancer Together Manual show you how to:

- ✓ Keep negative thoughts, feelings & beliefs from getting in the way of your best possible outcomes with your treatment.
- ✓ Use the Five Steps in this manual to keep your mind, body and spirit operating at maximum potential.
- ✓ Use your communication and support to maximize your journey right now.

Let this manual teach you how to refocus away from the negative thoughts that get in the way of putting all of your energy and resources in action. This will enable you to maximize your treatment, your resources and your physical and spiritual well-being.

The mind never stops generating thoughts, some negative, others positive and some are even neutral. The good news is. . .

- ✓ You have choices which allow you to observe your negative thoughts without believing them to be the 'truth'. Instead, you can focus your attention and energy on the thoughts that will serve you well in your quest to maximize your treatment outcomes.



- ✓ You can even write down all the negative thoughts that pass through your mind over a 10 – 15 minute period (you may be surprised how much there is). You'll notice that most of it is fear-based. This negative chatter appears to be defending and protecting you, but actually, it wastes your energy and your ability to enjoy living through your treatment and any enjoyment that may be available to you each day.
- ✓ So write the negative, scary chatter down and observe it and then it no longer is a part of you. Don't spend any more time on those negative thoughts — realize that they are normal, but not an important part of your journey to wellness. Don't let it run the show and don't let it push you around!
- ✓ The negative mental chatter relies on interpretations and opinions, rather than objective analysis. You can't tell these thoughts to go away, you simply must put them away in a space in your head and focus on what will give you more objectivity and energy with your disease and treatment.
- ✓ Unload the fearful, doubting thoughts and queasy feelings. These make the journey hard, heavy, exhausting. You don't need them.



Facing Cancer Together will give you the basics that will provide stability and forward movement in your treatment, while living through your diagnosis, treatment, hospitalizations, side-effects, and physician visits.

In return, it asks that you give up some old, habitual (ingrained) ways of thinking about your body, your disease and it's limitations. You will be asked to embrace some new ideas of what Cancer and Treatment is and what IS possible for you.

It also asks you to watch out for the **rubber band effect**. You leave your Facing Cancer Together class or support group and you are positive and full of courage. Next thing you know, someone makes a statement, you see an ad, or perhaps you read something on the Internet, and BANG . . . all the negative thoughts come dancing back into your mind. You're full of fear and tearful conversations start to flow.

You are just missing the energy of your group, or someone who can share this particular moment and say ' I understand, but we can't forget that . . .(some positive & forward-thinking thoughts)'

The rubber band won't be so quick to *snap back* when you have someone or



something to help you keep it stretched out in a more spacious way where you see possibility, and a sense that all will be well.

Let this course, this book, your medical resources and your family members or friends be the well you go to when troubling thoughts come up. Get in touch with anything and anyone who supports you, who can hold you up while **Facing Cancer Together**.

Three Investments you need to make

In order to get the good stuff you need to journey successfully through this life, this disease right now, you need to make three Investments.

1) Be a grown-up.

Oh, no! you say. Remember, this means:

- ✓ Going on about life with a minimum of muss and fuss, a minimum of drama, a minimum of teeth-gnashing. Move forward by taking just the next step.
- ✓ Recognizing the next thing to do and doing it calmly, purposefully, and fully with ease and appreciation. Remember your BFFN (Best Friend For Now) is chemotherapy with your treatment.

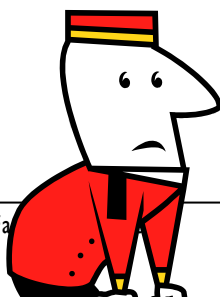
2) Follow the Five Steps.

- ✓ Treatment
- ✓ Diet
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Attitude
- ✓ Spirituality

3) Be the source of your own strength. AND add available support.

How to lighten your load

What's the big deal about clearing up negative attitudes and fears? You know the old saying: "It's better to let sleeping dogs lie." But what happens when the dogs wake up?



When we lug around our baggage, we can't see our situation as it really is. We're too overloaded with worry, and we can't focus on supporting our bodies in the best possible response to treatment.

We can keep gathering evidence that makes our bags heavier. And then we pass our worries and negativity onto those around us

People react to our stressed-out, baggage-toting behavior. We show up fearful, angry, or despondent and others react accordingly — which ADDS to our baggage, reinforcing the negative energy. Others may collude with us because of their own baggage.

The chip on your shoulder can become a redwood!

Check your baggage

Checking your baggage means releasing anything from our insides or outsides that makes our journey more difficult. To check your baggage:

- 1) Identify the mental chatter. Notice it, write it down and step outside it. When you observe it, it is no longer yours.
- 2) For each piece of mental chatter ask: Is it true? You may have to do some research or ask someone in authority.
- 3) If it is true, simply fix it the best you can at the time.

Where does baggage come from?

- Stories from others
- Memories
- Internet
- Comments we hear
- Out-of-context statements
- Associating your disease/ treatment with someone else's
- Fear of asking
- Questions from a knowledgeable source
- Stuff we make up

Change channels

When your thoughts are bringing you down, start clicking your "remote" and change to a more positive program.

- ✓ Write out your list of mental chatter. Next to each negative thought, write an alternative positive belief, thought or opinion. See that



the negative mental chatter was just one point of view — there are others!

- ✓ Look for the best possibility in the situation or decision.
- ✓ Give yourself something to prompt you to switch channels — a sticky note, a small note card, a brochure with sayings that evoke positive thoughts (you can do this!)
- ✓ Go for a walk, change locations, call a friend.
- ✓ Look for inspiration — in a book, music, a saying — whatever helps you to focus on what will support you in the moment.
- ✓ Look to the future — see what you want life to look like after you complete your treatment. Notice how it can all be worth it.