



Spirit of the Season

Ready, set, chaos! If you're like many people you are in a flurry of activity in anticipation of a busy holiday season. It's easy to get caught up in all the cooking, shopping, cleaning, wrapping, social engagements, etc., and lose focus not only of your wellness, but what this time of year represents. Let this newsletter be a reminder to drop the "to do" list and nurture yourself for a moment. But above all else, whether you engage in a spiritual tradition that recognizes a holiday now or not, let this newsletter also be a reminder that **this time of year represents HOPE. Hope for new beginnings, a new year, and the possibility of a better future. Hope for something in your life to be transformed.** But here's the catch – you have to be open to the belief that things can be different. You have to believe there is action that can be taken to shift the energy in your life. You don't have to know how it's going to happen or when or even believe 100% - but you have to stay open to possibility.

Easy to have hope when life is all peachy right? What about when life isn't going as you expected? Having hope can be especially challenging when you're in the muck of a rough season in your life. I experienced that seven years ago when I was dealing with a father who had just been diagnosed with stage 4 kidney cancer and was given 12 weeks to live. Not much hope at the outset there. What do you do in a situation like that? Having the benefit of time and reflection, I now see there were 3 key steps I took to stay hopeful. They were:

1. Stay mindful in the present moment.

Focusing on what is right in front of you and appreciating its presence can inspire hope. Thinking of the future can provoke feelings of fear. In the present there is power and there can be peace. Using the example of my dad, if I focused on enjoying his company in the present moment then I had hope. He was alive in the moment, he hadn't passed on yet, which left open the possibility of healing.

2. Have faith

Faith was critical in my experience of feeling hope. Each person has to figure out what faith means to them. It can be tied to a specific religion or practice or not. I can only speak for myself here and tell you that faith in God was a big source of hope for me. Hope for healing, and even if healing in the physical (earthly) sense didn't occur, hope in

knowing that he would eventually be free of pain and experience everlasting life. Faith for you might mean something else entirely, and that's ok.

3. Seek inspiration

Reading about or talking to others who have gone through similar situations and survived can be empowering and instill hope. I read inspirational books, talked to others who shared how their family members lived long beyond their prognosis, as well as spiritual texts. Seeking inspiration plants the seed of possibility in you.

Notice a theme? All these steps had a verb in them – in other words- I had to take action. I couldn't sit passively and expect to cultivate hope. I had to actively engage in some way. And you can too.

To help illustrate this point I want to share a story with you about a woman who faced very dire circumstances but emerged with a sense of hope, faith, and healing. Imagine you are a 27-year old young woman with no significant health history. You have a vibrant 18-month old son and one day you notice a lump in your breast. 27! Initially you are told it is nothing to worry about but it continues to grow and after a series of tests are told that you have Stage 3B inflammatory estrogen positive breast cancer. One of the most aggressive of all breast cancers. This is what Beth Baughman faced six years ago. She underwent 6 months of aggressive chemotherapy to shrink the tumor to a size where surgery would be possible. Then, underwent a double mastectomy along with lymph node removal followed by 8 weeks of radiation. She lost her hair, experienced the hormonal equivalent of menopause twice, and all this while trying to be a mother to a toddler. Can you imagine the stress she was under? If ever there was a situation where hope might be scarce this could be one of them. And yet, she didn't give up hope.

Beth credits her positive attitude, faith, support of family, and determination to heal as key factors in her outcome. She focused on what she could control and used cancer as a trigger to get her health in check. She started eating clean, exercising regularly, and reading to get inspired as well as inform herself about what she could do to get cancer-free. Since her diagnosis she has lost 60 pounds! As her faith developed, so too did her sense of hope, security, and personal growth. As a result of her cancer journey she feels she is a more faithful, positive, and appreciative person than she was before. While the road to recovery took a while, Beth is happily cancer free 6 years later! She continues to eat well, does yoga, works out at Cross Fit, and is now married and hoping to have another child via surrogate. Does she have bouts of fear and wondering if the cancer will come back? Of course she does. But her overriding message was this, "...stay positive, have faith in God, and never give up hope."

As you can see from the pictures below, Beth not only survived, but is thriving!



Beth during treatment



Beth with her son, 2014



Beth and her husband, 2014

My wish is that Beth's story gave you a glimmer of hope, especially if you're in a very trying season of your life. There is a Chinese proverb that says, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trial." Whether you are in a joyful season or challenging one, have hope my friends! The time for transformation is ahead of you! If you need help on your journey reach out to me for a free consultation.

Sincerely,

Shelly

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!