

# CANCER is a Marathon

26.2 WINNING  
STRATEGIES FOR  
CONQUERING  
CANCER



MATT JONES

Cancer is a Marathon

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# Disclaimer

The eBook contains information about one's mindset when dealing with cancer. The information is not medical advice, and should not be treated as such. The author is not a doctor and has not had any medical training. This eBook is his story and how he was able to handle his diagnosis of cancer. The intention is to provide inspiration and hope but not medical advice.

You must not rely on the information in the eBook as an alternative to medical advice from an appropriately qualified health professional. If you have any specific questions about any medical or health related matter you should consult an appropriately qualified professional.

If you think you may be suffering from any medical condition you should seek immediate medical attention. You should never delay seeking medical advice, disregard medical advice, or discontinue medical treatment because of information in the eBook.



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# Dedication

*To YOU the reader, remember you are more  
POWERFUL than cancer!*

# [INTRODUCTION]



It was the fall semester of my senior year of college and the leaves had just begun to change color. My future looked bright and I could not wait to graduate and begin my life in the “real world.” On September 11, 2002, all of my hopes and dreams would come to a crashing halt. That date became a turning point, marking the day my life forever changed. It was a little after one o’clock when my cell phone rang. On the other line was my doctor. I will never forget those three words he said.

At the age of twenty-three, I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. Overnight I went from your typical college student to fighting for my life. Over the next two years, I would battle cancer going in and out of remission. Around Valentine’s Day of 2004, I slipped into an unconscious state due to complications from the leukemia spreading to my cerebral spinal fluid. At two in the morning, my

family and friends were called because the doctors were not sure if I would make it through the night.

Against all odds, I recovered. On Mother's Day 2004, I walked out of the hospital after a successful bone marrow transplant and have been in remission ever since. On my one-year anniversary of finishing chemotherapy, I completed the San Diego Rock 'N Roll Marathon after relearning how to walk.

Conquering cancer like a marathon is an endurance event. It does not happen overnight, instead it is a series of small steps. These steps are sometimes forward but many times backwards. There are moments that you feel like giving up and quitting but somehow you continue fighting. This book contains 26.2 strategies I used that will help you to conquer cancer. Remember, life is a scared journey and to savor every moment.



## Develop Your Inner Strength

There is no way you can prepare for hearing the words, “you have cancer.” For me, it was a complete shock, as time seemed to stop. It felt like someone reached down and pushed the pause button on my life. I am sure that your reaction was similar to mine. It is almost as if someone rips the very life from you and leaves you as an empty shell of your former self. Am I going to die? What will happen to my loved ones? Why me? All of these questions and more, run through you mind as you try to comprehend and grasped the fact you have cancer.

The first night I spent in the hospital the head nurse Ginger told me about her sister. She had beaten cancer and told Ginger it had been one of the greatest blessings of her life. I figured her sister was either high on pain medication or had lost her mind. Getting cancer was the worst thing that had

ever happened to me. That is until I discovered the inner strength inside of me. If someone would have told me everything I would go through, I would not have believed them.

According to the “Adversity Principle,” challenges and hardships lead to greater growth and development. Through my experience with cancer, I discovered inside of me a strength I never knew existed. Even though you may be feeling weaker and smaller than you ever have, inside is a strength waiting to be discovered. You develop it by facing the challenges, setbacks, and disappointments with everything you have. Slowly it emerges when you become committed to an attitude that refuses to give up or lose hope.

Having cancer became one of the greatest blessings of my life because through it I was able to develop my inner strength. It would be this same inner strength that would allow me to complete the San Diego Rock N’ Roll Marathon after relearning how to walk.

“Character is forged through the fires of adversity.”

- MATT JONES



## Visualize Your Victory

A timeless truth states, “Where there is no vision the people perish.” In order to be a cancer conqueror you have to visualize yourself being healthy again. Across the United States, they have racecar-driving schools. One of the things they teach you is what to do if the car spins out of control. They instruct you not to focus on the wall but instead focus on where you want to go on the track. This reason for this is that where you place your focus is where you will end up.

When the cancer came back the second time and spread to my cerebral spinal fluid a doctor I named Dr. Doom, give me a less than ten percent chance of living. If I had accepted her vision for my life, you would not be reading these words. You cannot afford to focus on the cancer or the negative odds some doctor may give you. Instead, you must visualize your victory. For me, it was to be healthy again and one day complete a marathon.

You must believe it is possible you can beat the cancer. Even if the evidence is contrary and you are facing insurmountable odds. All you need is a seed of hope and know it is possible. It does not matter what your doubts are or what others say. What counts is if you believe, because if you do, your vision of being healthy again can become real.

“If you can see it and believe it is possible, you can do it.”

- MATT JONES



## Take Action

After telling me I had cancer, my doctor said I needed to check into the hospital. As a senior in college and the weekend approaching, that was the last thing I wanted to do. In order to regain my health I knew I had to take action. You may have to do some things today that you do not want to do. However by doing those things you will have tomorrow the things you want to have.

When you receive a diagnosis of cancer, you have to do whatever you can to get back in remission. This may mean to change your diet, begin to exercise, or learn new ways to deal with stress. You have to put yourself in the best possible position to regain your health. One of the ways that I took action was to read inspirational/motivational books like this one. I realized the power the mind has in the healing process.

By taking action, you prove to yourself that you are more powerful than the cancer. At first, I felt helpless and small in comparison to the cancer and took my fall semester of college off. When I relapsed with one semester left before graduation doctors recommended I put off my classes once again. However, I took action and completed the final eighteen hours needed for graduation. By taking action and not letting the cancer defeat me, it made me feel empowered and I was better able to cope with the chemotherapy.

What is one small action step that you can take that will help on your road to recovery? Maybe it is to get up and take a walk down the hospital hallway or to eat one more serving of vegetables every day. When I had to relearn how to walk my first goal was to take one-step by myself. That was a long way from completing a marathon. Eventually step-by-step I did it. This is also the same way you beat cancer, taking action one-step at a time.

“Take manageable steps and keep moving.”

- BEAR GRILLS



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## Check Your Attitude

You cannot change the fact that you have cancer but you can choose your attitude. As I was packing my bags to go to the hospital for the first time my good friend Justin stopped by. He is a great optimism and told me that there were over ten million cancer survivors and if they could do it then I could as well. Those words of hope helped me to check my attitude. They allowed me to move from despair and doubt to a place of possibility and faith.

As you know, when told you have cancer there are all kinds of negative thoughts running through your head. Even now after being in remission for several years the negative thoughts start to creep up when I have a sore throat or cough that lingers. According to Charles Swindoll, your choice of attitude is the single most important decision you can make.

Numerous studies have shown that people who have a positive attitude are not only happier but also heal faster. One of the keys in the battle versus cancer is your attitude. Checking your attitude consists of three main things. The first is to have an attitude of appreciation. The things that we focus on expand in life. The second part of checking your attitude is to have an attitude of belief. A wise man once said, “All things are possible to those who believe.” Finally, you must check your attitude of commitment. Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to fight the cancer and go back into remission?

“Every thing can be taken from a person expect for one thing, the last of their freedoms. To choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.”

- DR. VICKTOR FRANKAL (HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR)



## Love and Be Loved

My girlfriend at the time and I started dating six months before I got sick. The hospital where I was receiving chemotherapy was fifty miles from where we were going to school. Every morning after spending the night at the hospital, she would drive fifty miles to go to school. After a full day of classes she would go to work in the evening, drive back to the hospital, and fall asleep on a small couch in my room. Seeing her walk through the hospital door was the highlight of my day.

One of the most important lessons I learned through my experience with cancer was the power of love. Through family and friends I experienced the power of unconditional love was. In the end, it does not matter how much money you have left in your bank account, if you drove the latest model sports car, or if you lived in a house overlooking the ocean. True success is to be loved and loving others.

Many times in life we fail to appreciate our loved ones, even taking them for granted. At times, we treat them bad knowing they will still love us. Other times we do not tell them how much they really mean to us. For me it meant reconnecting with my Dad in a deeper way. One of my favorite memories of being in the hospital was when I was too weak to walk and my dad would push me around in a wheelchair.

For me, having cancer made me realize how important my family and friends were. Take this time to reconnect with loved ones. Tell a spouse, child, parent, or a friend how much you love and appreciate them. If you love those around you and receive the love from others, no matter what the prognosis becomes you have conquered cancer.

“The most important thing in the world  
is to love and be loved.”

- MATT JONES



## Get a Second Opinion

In January 2004, I was sitting on a hospital bed there was a knock on the door. In walked Dr. Doom. She pulled up a chair next to the bed and told me that the cancer had come back and I had a less than ten percent chance of living to the age of thirty. She got up and walked out of the room.

A doctor can give you a diagnosis but the prognosis is not up to them. When a doctor gives you a percentage it is only their best-educated guest. Even though I am grateful for all of my doctors, you must realize that they are human just like the rest of us. When I first went into remission, my doctor gave me an eighty percent chance the cancer would never come back. It came back not once but twice.

Do not be afraid to ask for a second opinion when it comes to a diagnosis, odds of survival, or type of treatment. You must remember the final say is with you. The doctors and

medical staff in a sense are your employees and you are the boss.

Thankfully, after Dr. Doom left I had the notion to get a second opinion. Instead of telling me grim odds, I was reassured by another doctor that I could get through this. That second opinion gave me hope and the strength to keep on fighting.

When I started training to run a marathon some of my family and friends suggested setting a more reasonable goal. They suggested maybe running a half marathon first. I realize that they were trying to look out for me but just like with Dr. Doom I had to get a second opinion. After talking to other cancer conquerors that completed a marathon, I knew I could as well.

“Someone else’s opinion of you does not  
have to become your reality.”

- LES BROWN



## Find a Support System

When I decided to run a marathon, I knew running one by myself would be nearly impossible. I joined Team in Training ([www.teamintraining.org](http://www.teamintraining.org)), the largest fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. They have top coaches to train you in your event. Everything you need to know: nutrition, what to wear, running form, workout schedule, amount of water to drink, rest, stretching, and how to run the marathon. An additional benefit was the other participants as we encouraged one another during training and the marathon.

Just as I did for the marathon, you need to find a strong support system. I was very blessed to have my family and friends. Hopefully, you have people close to you that can help you. Do not be afraid to ask them for assistance and remember that no request is too small. One of the things that I appreciated most was my girlfriend bringing me Gatorade to drink while I was in the hospital.

You can also find a support system through the hospital by asking the nurses and your social worker. I was amazed at all the different programs, support groups, and resources available. Another great source is the American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)) as they can refer you to local resources and chapters. There are resources and support available to you so make sure you take advantage of them. They will help you get to the finish line of remission.

“A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”

- KING SOLOMON



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## Look for the Benefit

Many times, out of our darkest nights and most trying challenges come our brightest days. When you are battling cancer, it is easy to focus on everything that is wrong. You may think what good could come from having this disease. The discovery I found was within every adversity there is a seed that contains a greater benefit. If it were not for the cancer I would have never wrote this book, ran a marathon, or be able to inspire others through my story.

For so many people getting cancer has become a positive turning point. It is an opportunity to examine your priorities and the direction you are going in life. Maybe there is an area of your life out of balance and this is your wake up call. I know for me that was true. It could be that you do not spend or show the amount of love for your family as you should or place work before them.

One of the benefits from my cancer was my friends Jordan and Justin reconnecting with their father. Their parents had divorced when they were kids and through the years their relationship with their dad had become estranged. The hospital where I received my bone marrow transplant happened to be the same hospital where their dad worked.

Jordan told me that after seeing me almost die he knew it was time for him and Justin to reconnect with their father. A few years later, their dad passed away. At the memorial service, Jordan shared the story about reconnecting with his dad. He said how thankful he was for being able to reconnect with him and having a relationship over the past few years.

I realize having cancer is one of the worst experiences you can go through. Even though this is true, remember to look for the benefit. It is there and brings meaning to your situation.

“Every adversity, every heartache, and every failure carries with it a seed of an equivalent or greater benefit.”

- NAPOLEON HILL



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## Laugh and Smile

According to a study in Good Housekeeping the average four year old laughs or smiles four hundred times a day. By the time they reach thirty that number drops to fifteen. One of the great resources available is the power of laughter and smiling. Before I got sick, my girlfriend and I had been planning a trip to see her mom who lives in Key West. Unfortunately, our plans had to change and her mom came to visit me in the hospital.

Even though I was in a hospital receiving chemotherapy, we had the time of our life, laughing and carrying on as if we were hanging out at Sloppy Joe's in Key West. At one point, the head nurse came in and was concerned that I had lost my mind. She could not understand how someone undergoing treatment for cancer could be having so much fun.

One of the fun things about running the San Diego Rock N' Roll Marathon are some of the colorful people running. There were several Elvis impersonators, men dressed as cheerleaders, and one guy he wore only a hospital gown. Running a marathon is hard but seeing those people would bring a smile to your face and for a moment, you forget the pain you were experiencing.

You may have heard of Norman Cousins. He claimed to have healed himself for what his doctors thought was an incurable illness through laughter. Even though there is no definite scientific audience proving laughter can cure cancer, the benefits are enormous. When we laugh, endorphins are released that aid in the healing process. Laughter also reduces stress and enhances one's quality of life. These benefits have caused several cancer institutes to offer laughter therapy.

I recommend seeing if your hospital or treatment center offers laughter therapy. If they do not you can create your own by having your family and friends tell you jokes, read you funny stories and watch funny movies together.

**"Laughter is the best medicine."**

**- TIMELESS TRUTH**



## Have Hope

In order to prepare me for my bone marrow transplant I went through a series of intense rounds of chemotherapy and full body radiation. The reason was to wipe out my immune system and make way for the donor's marrow to form a new one. At the end of the treatment, I was sicker than I had ever been. It felt as if I was at the edge of death. The one thing that kept me going was the hope of a brighter day.

Lying in bed, I shared with one of the nurses how one day I was going to share my story with others and inspire them. The hope of being healthy once again and turning the tragedy into something good give me the strength to endure the pain.

As I ran the marathon, it was the hope of crossing the finish line that kept me going. That hope was more powerful than the aches in my body, the fact I was exhausted or that I

wanted to quit. Every mile I ran the hope grew stronger and stronger.

After relapsing a second time I remember my grandmother saying, “This too shall pass.” Those words of hope she gave to me I now give to you. Keep hope alive, never let go of the belief of a brighter future. NO matter what you are going through this too shall pass. Have Hope!

“Man (Woman) can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air ... but only for one second without hope.”

- HAL LINDSEY



## Face the Fear

I never in my life experienced the amount of fear I had upon hearing the words, “you have cancer.” Fear left unchecked becomes a prison that locks you away. It leaves you in a paralyzed state unable to act and your existence is only a shell of what it could be.

One of the first times I can remember facing this type of fear was Mrs. Farmer’s seventh grade gym class. It was my favorite class expect for one thing, swimming. I did not know how to swim and was afraid of putting my head under the water. On the last day of class, my worst fear was realized; we were going to be diving.

Throughout my journey of battling cancer fear was a constant companion. The fear of not living, pain from a medical procedure, and the unknown were just some of the fears. Even today, when I get a cough, sore throat, or feel run down

in the back of my head the fear kicks in. It is as if I am back in seventh grade standing in line shaking with fear as I wait my turn to plunge into the depths of the swimming pool.

The reality of life is the fear will never go away. After committing to run a marathon, I had the fear of rather or not, I would finish. The key is to realize that fear will never completely go away. Instead, we must face the fears we have. It is natural to have fears but just because you have them does not mean they have to control your life.

One of the greatest lessons I learned in life was at the deep end of the Santa Fe Trail Junior High swimming pool. Standing at the edge looking down Mrs. Farmer began to count down. I was faced with two fears. The fear of jumping and the fear of what my classmates would say if I did not. I jumped and learned what courage was. Courage is facing the fear we have and doing the thing we must do.

“Courage is not the absence of fear. It is facing the fear and doing the thing we want or need to do.”

- MATT JONES



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## Enjoy the Little Things

One of the great benefits of having cancer is that it allows you time to stop and examine your life as well as your priorities. So often in life, we are striving for the so-called big things—new car, promotion, or the bigger house. The reality, life is mostly made up of the small moments that happen every single day. This is where you find true happiness.

If we become so focus on the finish line, we miss the beauty of the journey. This is what happened to me while running the San Diego Rock N’ Roll marathon. It is a fun event with bands at every mile, people dressed up in funny costumes, and the beauty of the city of San Diego. At first, I was consumed with finishing I was missing the fun stuff going on. Thankfully, I realized that even though my focus was on the big picture of finishing I could enjoy the little things along the way.

Went I first walked through the hospital doors I did not know what laid ahead. Would I ever see a sunset again, hear the chirping of birds, or experience a rainbow after a rainstorm? One of my most vivid memories of being in the hospital was my girlfriend bringing me candy licorice called Twizzlers. Even though it was a small act, it made all the difference in the world.

It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and miss all the small miracles that happen around us on a daily basis. Take time today to enjoy the little things in your life. Maybe it is a card from a friend, spending time with your pet, or enjoying the beauty of living another day on this great earth. As you keep your focus on getting back into remission, remember also to appreciate the little things along your journey.

“Some of life’s most precious treasures are the small things; smile from a friend, wag of a puppy’s tail, laughter of a child.”

- MATT JONES



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## Practice Faith

Faith is the evidence of things unseen. When I made it my vision to run a marathon, the odds and conventional wisdom were stacked against me. At the time, a physical therapist had just wheeled me back to my hospital room due to exhaustion of walking five yards with the help of her and my dad. The only real evidence that it would be possible was my faith.

When you are diagnosed with cancer, faith becomes a major part of the healing process. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines faith as, “something that is believed especially with strong conviction.” You must have faith that healing can occur and you can be cancer free. With every fiber of your body, you must hold the conviction that it is possible. Put faith into practice by believing your health will be restored and that life will become richer and fuller beyond your wildest imagination.

Practicing faith is also about putting our trust and faith in someone or something outside of us. For many this is a higher power. Personally, my journey with cancer allowed me to grow spiritually and have a greater faith in my personal beliefs of God.

I also learned that I had to put faith in my doctors, nurses, and the treatment that was prescribed for me; trusting that everything would work out to my highest good. Faith is really a simple concept and something we practice every single day. Do you understand how electricity fully works? Yet every time we flip on a light switch we have faith the light will come on. How about driving and having faith that the other person will stay in their lane or will not run a stoplight?

Besides having faith in conquering cancer also have faith that something good will come out of the situation. This is the belief I had from day one and it carried me through the dark nights; have faith that all things work together for a better good.

“Faith is like radar that sees through the fog.”

-CORRIE TEN BOOM



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## Move Your Body

One of the most important things and sometimes one of the hardest is to move your body. Many times, I was so wiped out by the chemotherapy and various medications that all I wanted to do was to lie in bed. Dr. Bodensteiner who was my main bone marrow transplant doctor would always get after me to get out of bed. He said if I just walked up and down the hallway of the transplant unit, which was the length of four rooms I would be able to get out of the hospital sooner. That was all the motivation I needed.

After that I made it my goal to get out of bed and walk down the hallway and back each day. After awhile I started walking longer and longer. Finally, I was able to ride a stationary bike that was in the unit.

We are all familiar with the benefits of exercise- it reduces stress, increases energy, and can even help with depression. It

also helps in the healing process through aiding the immune system. The great news is you do not have to go out and run a marathon to get some of the benefits. Maybe like me all you can do is walk a few yards and back. So right now go and move your body. Take a walk, join a yoga class, or you can even do exercises lying in bed.

“If you’re alive you’ve got to flap your arms and legs, you’ve got to jump around a lot, for life is the very opposite of death, and therefore you must at very least think noisy and colorfully, or you’re not alive.”

- MEL BROOKS



## Count Your Blessings

One night after giving a speech, a man from Uganda approached me. He went on to tell me that in his country eighty percent of the people are without fresh water and the average income was around two hundred and forty six dollars for the whole year. We are so blessed. So many things that we take for granted others dream about having.

One of the challenges of dealing with cancer is to be able to find the blessings in your life. It is easy to focus on the negative things that are happening to you. I would think about my friends on the weekend having a good time while I was stuck in a hospital bed.

Things began to turn around for me when I started to look for the blessings that were in my life. Knowledgeable doctors, nurses that cared, love of family and friends, and the belief that this experience would make me a better person.

Think of one blessing in your life. Maybe it is your spouse, child, or the fact you are still alive. Take a big deep breathe in and blow out. How big of check would write for that? Priceless.

If you find yourself dwelling on the negatives of life and have trouble focusing on the blessings, I encourage you to start a Gratitude Journal. Every night before going to bed, write down three blessings that happened in your life that day. It might be a good report from the doctor, a shared laugh, or the beauty of a flower. You can also write down three blessings in your life when you wake up in the morning.

Growing up one of the songs we sang in church contained the words, “count your blessings name them one by one.” Those are good words to live by.

“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”

- WILLIE NELSON



## Live Fully

Imagine waking up tomorrow and having \$86,400 credited to your bank account. The catch, it does not carry over at the end of the day, you lose everything you did not spend. This happens every single day. What would you do with the money? If you are like me, you would spend it. Every single day we are given 86,400 seconds. At the end of the day, they are gone forever. How are you spending your time?

It is easy to get caught up in life that we forget to enjoy it. Many times, we put our happiness on hold for some future event or time. When I graduate school, get married, or the kids move out. How about this one, when I retire, then I can really start living.

Having had cancer at such a young age, I was faced with my own mortality and realized how precious every moment of life is. We are here one moment and gone the next. So often,

we take life for granted and instead of really living it to the fullest we go through the motions. The words of Henry David Thoreau, “the majority of people live quiet lives of desperation” are true of too many people. The reality is, everyone is terminal, and it is called life. None of us knows how long we have on this earth. That is why it is important to live each day realizing what a precious gift it is.

It is so easy to be caught up in all the hustle and bustle and petty things of life that we miss out on living. What can you do today to live your life to the fullest? To close your eyes at the end of the day knowing you lived to your full potential. How can you make this earth a little better today? Maybe it is giving someone a smile or making them laugh, maybe it is the courage family and friends see from you as you battle cancer, or maybe it is you using your special talents to be of service to others. Yesterday is a cancel check, tomorrow is a promissory note, and all we have is today.

“All men (women) die, not all men (women) really live.”

- BRAVEHEART



## Water Your Mind

One summer when I was a little boy, my grandparents came to visit. My grandfather had been a farmer and in the back of our yard was a patch of dirt. He helped me plant a garden. After putting the seeds into the ground he told would two important instructions. “Matt, make sure you water them every day and pull the weeds.” Every day I would go out to my little garden, water the crops and if there were in weeds pull them.

As they started to grow, I was so excited and wanted to pick them right away but my mom made sure I waited until they were ripe. Finally, the big day came and I could hardly wait, it felt like Christmas morning. Just as I got outside to pick the vegetables, a gopher was eating the last of them.

After relapsing and my doctor telling me that I needed a bone marrow transplant, I became depressed. I laid in my

bed feeling sorry for myself and having a pity party. Did I have every right in the world to feel the way I did? Maybe, but it was not helping me to get healthy again. Instead of watering my mind with positive thoughts, I had allowed the weeds of negativity to grow out of control.

Fortunately, I met a special nurse who I called Nurse Ratchet. One day she had enough with my victim attitude, came in my room, and let me have it. She said, “Matt your pity party is over, now get up, put a smile on your face, and get in there I take a shower, because you stink!” And I did, not only physically but also mentally.

Thanks to Nurse Ratchet’s wake up call, I started watering my mind and pulling the weeds of negativity. One of the best ways I know to water our minds is by reading books. Also you need to be around people who are positive, encouraging, and have an attitude of victory. When you have an illness like cancer, you cannot afford to have a negative attitude or be around people that do. Make sure you water your mind, pull the weeds of negativity, and watch out for gophers.

“You are the same today you’ll be in five years except for two things: the people you meet and the books you read.”

- CHARLIE “TREMENDOUS” JONES



## Stay Fueled

Every mile of the marathon, there were aid stations. Volunteers handed out water, sports drinks, and nutrition bars. There were also spots where you could receive first aid for a blister or other problems. Reaching these aid stations and receiving a drink or throwing it on your head renewed the spirit. Besides the aid stations runners carried energy gels called GU's which they would take throughout the race. They gave much needed energy to the body.

A runner needs to stay fueled to complete the race, in dealing with cancer you must also stay empowered. One of the main concerns my doctors had before my bone marrow transplant was making sure that I ate enough food. As you know the mixture of hospital food, chemotherapy, and dozens of pills do not lend to a healthy appetite. Just as it is important to stay fueled physically, the same is true mentally and emotionally. One of the ways you can do this is through

personal empowerment. For me it consists of what I call the “Daily Power Three.” This includes mediation, visualizations, and affirmations.

Another powerful way to stay fueled is having a journal where you write down your feelings, thoughts, and hopes for the day. You can also write down your blessings. There is something magically about putting our thoughts, worries, and ideas in writing. You can also make a vision board. This is a collage of pictures and words that you want your life to be like. For example, you would want to put things on your collage that represent health to you. It could be a place you want to travel or things to accomplish once you are healthy.

One of the things that kept me fueled was hanging all of the cards I received on the wall around my room. Looking at the cards reminded me of all thoughts and prayers from my loved ones. To stay fueled you will also want to eliminate negative people who I call energy vampires. You cannot afford their life draining energy in your life.

“Fuel yourself daily-Faith, Understanding, Energy, and Love.”

- MATT JONES



## Ask for Help

I was twenty-five years old and sitting on a hospital bed, I reached down to tie my shoes and could not remember how. There was a physical therapist in my room and she looked on as my dad walked over and just like when I was four years old he tied my shoes. Both of them helped me to stand up. As I tried to take a step I could not remember how. They placed my arms around their necks as they helped me re-learn how to walk. Even with their help, I only went five yards before they had to bring me back to the hospital room in a wheelchair due to exhaustion.

It was a humbling experience for me. However, out of it I learned an important lesson. At times in life, it is necessary to be willing to receive help from others. Just because you ask for help does not mean you are weak. We have all heard jokes about people not stopping to ask for directions and

end up getting completely lost. When it comes to cancer, asking for help can save your life.

One thing you need is an advocate. This person can look out for you and make sure you are receiving the best care possible. I was very blessed to have my girlfriend along with my parents. They made sure nurses would double check the medications, followed up on test results, and asked questions about the different treatment options. When my insurance ran out, I needed to raise over one hundred thousand dollars for a bone marrow transplant. They located the national foundation for transplants (<http://www.transplants.org>), an organization that helps people raise money run for transplants.

Maybe you need help with chores around the house, ride to your doctor's appointments, or help watching your children. Family and friends are more than willing to help, but many times are not sure how. Do not be afraid to ask for help.

**“Ask for help, not because you're weak, but to remain strong.”**

**- LES BROWN**



## Practice Patience

One of the hardest lessons in life is to learn patience. This is especially true in today's society of instant coffee, microwaves, and TiVo. Many people are like the person who prayed, "God give me patience, and give it to me now!" When you are battling cancer or running a marathon devolving patience becomes a necessity.

Due to a low white blood count caused by the chemotherapy, all of my treatments were in the hospital. For me that was one of the most challenging things I had to deal with. Being in the hospital away from my friends, family, and barely having any energy to leave my hospital bed wore me down mentally. It seemed like time stood still, waiting until the day the doctor would release me to go home.

Spending all those days, weeks, and months in the hospital taught me patience. I came to realize that the healing process

takes time. You do not become healthy or get back to being normal overnight. Long after the treatments were finished and I was in remission the process of readjusting back to life was still taking place. For a long time I felt lost and out of place with the rest of the world as I tried to readjust. When you are battling cancer, you think that if only you can get into remission then your life will be perfect and you will have no more problems. I think in some ways readjusting to life after cancer is just as difficult as fighting it.

In life as in conquering cancer, you have to practice patience. Patience with the doctors, nurses, treatment, loved ones, and most importantly yourself. Patience is a learned behavior and one of choice. One of the greatest benefits of going through cancer was having the time to be able to examine my life and where it was headed. So often, we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that we never take time to know if we are headed in the right direction. When you spend most of your day in a hospital bed, you have plenty of time for personal reflection and focusing on what matters most in life.

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”

-SAINT AUGUSTINE



## Be Joyful

When you have cancer, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and that you do not have control over anything in your life. Worry, doubt, and fear take over your thoughts. This is why it is essential to be joyful. No matter what is happening to us, we can always choose to be joyful. Joy is not a fleeting emotion that we feel when something good happens to us or everything is perfect. Joy is much deeper than that and is a lasting attitude that comes through a choice on our part. It is not dependent on our circumstances but our attitude.

Being joyful is about finding the good in life. It is living with a peace, contentment, and awe of life. You find joy in the appreciation of living one more day, time spent in a presence of a loved one, or knowing that there is a greater purpose to all things. By allowing joy to fill your life you become more powerful than cancer. Joy allowed me to get through relaps-

ing, all the different treatments, and the amount of time it took to recover.

Kay Warren (Wife of Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Life) a two-time cancer survivor provides the following practical ways to be joyful:

1. Put the humor in Life.
2. Practice Gratitude
3. Choose to be a giver than a taker
4. Live in the moment
5. Find the “bless in the mess”

“We cannot cure the world of sorrows,  
but we can choose to live in joy.”

- JOSEPH CAMPBELL



## Speak Words of Life

A Jewish Proverb states, “There is life and death in the power of the tongue.” One of the most powerful things you can do to conquer cancer is speak words of life. As a child you may have said the following phrase, “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” Words do hurt and when it comes to conquering cancer they can become the difference between life and death. The words we speak and the thoughts we think determine our emotions. Positive emotions aid in the healing process whereas negative ones hinder it.

My first night in the hospital, I repeated over and over, “I have leukemia.” I was speaking words of death to myself. There is power in the spoken word and the thoughts we think. We attract into our lives the words we speak and the thoughts we think. Below are three ways to speak words of life:

## 1. DO NOT OWN THE CANCER

Never say your or my cancer. That is giving power to it. When referring to the cancer, instead of saying my cancer say the cancer.

## 2. MONITOR YOUR SELF-TALK

Self-talk are the things we say or think to ourselves. Researchers estimate that eighty percent of the thoughts an average person thinks are negative. One way to combat negative self-talk is through affirmations. Here are three you can use:

- It's Great to be Alive!
- I am More POWERFUL than cancer!
- Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better!

## 3. HAVE PEOPLE SPEAK WORDS OF LIFE TO YOU

As I mentioned earlier when my friend Justin said there were over ten million cancer survivors and I could be one as well, those were words of life. You cannot afford to be around people who speak words of death including doctors.

“Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better.”

-ÉMILE COUÉ



## Eliminate Worry

One of the biggest challenges in facing cancer is the worry. Even when you are in remission, the worry is still there. Thoughts such as will it come back or can I readjust to life flood your mind. You can never fully rid yourself of worry. To a small degree, it can be beneficial. Early detection and prevention are two of the most important factors in conquering cancer.

However, most of the things we worry about never happen and are out of our control. Therefore, it does no good in worrying about most of things we worry about daily. However, as you know this is easier said than done. The most effective way not to worry is to occupy your mind with something else. Below are some helpful suggestions to eliminate worry.

Enjoy Life

Love and Be Loved

Imagine being Healthy

Meditate

Inspire Others

Never give up Hope

Appreciate the Small Things

Treat Yourself

Envision a Brighter Future

Wish Upon a Star

Open your Heart to the Good in Life

Reflect on Good Times

Remember all the Positive Things in your Life

You are more Powerful than Cancer

**“Don’t Worry, Be Happy.”**

**- MEHER BABA**



## Find Peace

One of the biggest breakthroughs in my marathon of cancer was when I able to find peace with the fact that my life was never going to be the same. Once you reach this place, it becomes possible to move on to healing and finding the victory.

By finding peace, I was able to use the diagnosis and journey with cancer as the single greatest transformational experience of my life. Before the cancer, I was like an ordinary caterpillar. The cancer was my cocoon and I emerged from it a beautiful butterfly.

I see life through new eyes; the old pettiness does not matter as much. I see the beauty that everyday holds through the colors of blooming flowers, the warm of the sun, and the greatest of the night sky. I am truly blessed and I count myself as one of the lucky ones to have experienced this thing called

cancer. Not because of the cancer but because of the person I have become through finding peace in the midst of a tragic event.

Peace comes from acceptance, realizing that we cannot change the past but instead believe and know with everything in us that some good can come about. Peace comes when we realize that when we cannot change our circumstances we must simply make the best out of them. Peace comes from living in the now, letting go of past regrets, worries, and the if only. Peace is living in the present not anxious with tomorrow and the challenges and problems it may bring.

Finding peace comes when you realize that even out of the most horrific and tragic events can come some of life's greatest moments and learning experiences. It comes from finding inside of yourself that greater person than you ever imagine existed. Finding peace comes from allowing yourself to be transformed like the Phoenix who rose from the ashes.

“Peace is the greatest type of wealth.”

- MATT JONES



## Celebrate

One of my favorite songs is “Celebrate good times, come on!” There is some much to celebrate in life. The fact you are reading this right now is cause for celebration. After crossing the finish line of the marathon, a medal was placed around my neck. It was such a great feeling.

I had recovered from a semi-coma, re-learned how to walk, and two years later completed a marathon. The first place we stopped after the race was In and Out where I got a hamburger, fries, and a milkshake. I ate them guilt free. In life, it is important to celebrate your victories, to relish the moment.

It is also important to celebrate as you go along the journey. Do not wait until the end to celebrate life and all it offers. Each day you wake up should be a celebration. Life is a magical experience filled with wondrous joys and pleasant

surprises. Celebrate your life, your family, friends, successes, and your future.

During my marathon with cancer, I learned the importance to celebrate life. That is why ever year I celebrate the day I received my bone marrow transplant (April 14<sup>th</sup>), the day I was diagnosed (September 11<sup>th</sup>) and the day I left the hospital for good (Mother's Day). One of the greatest days of my life was walking out of the hospital on Mother's day 2004. Since that day, I have remained in remission.

In life, we celebrate the victory of our favorite sports team, get excited at the concert of our favorite band, why not get excited about your life. At the end of my talks, I have the audience cross the finish line and yell, "Victory, Victory, Victory!" I believe one of the most important things is to get excited and celebrate our lives. Right now thing of something that you can celebrate, go ahead throw yourself a party. Why not? Life goes by so fast and it is easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle that we never stop to enjoy it.

"The more you praise and celebrate your life,  
the more there is in life to celebrate."

- OPRAH WINFREY



## Live One Day at a Time

If someone would have told me how long my journey with cancer would be and all that I would go through there would have been no way I could have handled it. In the same way if I would have known how hard it would have been to complete a marathon I probably would have never signed up for it.

Running a marathon is relatively simple, one-step at a time. In the same way you conquer cancer one day at a time and sometimes it is one hour at a time. Many times my goal was just to make it through the day. It was the hope of one day closer to going home.

One way to live one day at a time is to find joy in little things. For me it was waiting for the mail to come, having chocolate pudding for dinner, or seeing a family member or friend walk through my hospital door. Too often, we get caught up in the worries of tomorrow and it robs us of the joys of today.

When I relapsed for the first time and was told I needed a bone marrow transplant it would have been easy to have become paralyzed by fear. I knew that if I would have focused on all the unknowns and what might lay ahead I would have never gotten through it. My doctor gave me the choice of checking into the hospital that night or the next day.

Knowing that I had a long journey ahead of me and unsure how it would turn out, I made the choice to worry about tomorrow when it came. That night I celebrated life by going out to eat and watching a movie.

Deal with tomorrow, tomorrow. Live fully this day, it is all we will ever have.

“Life is lived in the present. Yesterday is gone.  
Tomorrow is yet to be. Today is the miracle. “

- UNKNOWN

## WHAT CANCER CANNOT DO

Cancer is so limited...  
It cannot cripple love.  
It cannot shatter hope.  
It cannot corrode faith.  
It cannot eat away peace.  
It cannot destroy confidence.  
It cannot kill friendship.  
It cannot shut out memories.  
It cannot silence courage.  
It cannot reduce eternal life.  
It cannot quench the Spirit.

**-AUTHOR UNKNOWN**



## Matt Jones

Matt Jones is a professional speaker, author, three-time cancer conqueror, founder of the R.E.A.L. Leadership Academy. On September 11, 2002 at the age of twenty-three, he was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer had spread to his brain, and the doctors did not think he would live. Against all odds, Matt recovered and had a bone marrow transplant. Due to the cancer spreading to his brain, he had to relearn how to walk. One year after finishing his treatment, he completed the San Diego Rock N' Roll Marathon. He has also completed marathons in Rome, Tokyo, and Peru. His goal is to complete a marathon on every continent.

Matt's story has been featured in international magazines and on TV shows. As a professional speaker, Matt travels around the country inspiring and motivating audiences through his amazing story. He shares his personal strategies to overcome challenges, stay motivated, and achieve greater success.

He is the author of the book, “Going through Hell? Don’t Stop!”, “Life’s a Marathon,” “Sales is a Marathon,” “Leadership is a Marathon,” and “101 Timeless Truths.” He holds a B.A. in Communication, M.L.S. with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership, and is pursuing a PhD in Organizational Leadership.

Matt’s mission is to inspire individuals and organizations to reach their true potential.



## An Inspiring Speaker for your next Event!

Are you looking for a speaker to inspire and motivate your next meeting? Matt Jones is the ideal speaker to open, close, or do a breakout session for your next event. In his talks, Matt shares strategies learned from his near death experience while battling cancer, learning how to walk again, and achieving his amazing goal of running a marathon.

To check availability or for more information go to [www.MatthewDJones.com](http://www.MatthewDJones.com) or call 1-800-676-1598.

“Matt Jones speaks in a voice that transforms lives, and moves audiences of all kinds. He is truly one of the most gifted speakers I ever had the honor of working with, mentored, or sharing the stage with, I highly recommend Matt to speak at any occasion.”

**- LES BROWN, AWARD WINNING SPEAKER  
AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR**

