



## **SELF EMPOWERMENT**

*Welcome! We, the medical staff of the San Diego Cancer Center are dedicated to you, our patients. Today cancer can be cured or controlled in ways that optimize quality of life. To best accomplish this, we encourage you to be an active participant in your own healthcare. Working together as partners with you, we treat the disease with the best medicines and technology available and in tandem, we encourage you to think positively, knowing that this makes more of a difference than you may think. To this end, it is essential for you to feel free to ask questions about your therapies as well as expressing your physical and emotional needs. We firmly believe that together, we can best optimize your health and wellbeing ---going beyond just surviving into **living fully**.*

*It is for this reason that **Dr. Paul Brenner, M.D., Ph.D.**, a physician and counseling psychologist is on our staff, and we are offering the **following suggestions for your recovery**.*

Cancer is not who you are. **YOU ARE SO MUCH MORE!**

Here are some suggestions that we know have helped many people:

1. **To honor our personal FEELINGS and EMOTIONS** concerning the diagnosis of cancer, it is often healing to acknowledge them to ourselves, to those involved in our care, or a therapist. These inner concerns **are normal**, yet in their sorting out, become a vital source of self-empowerment.
2. **VISUALIZATION and IMAGERY** travel along the same neural pathways within the brain as any experience in “real time”. With your eyes closed, imagine your cancer disappearing, changing its form with whatever healing image sparks your imagination. Visual imagery can be practiced in the quietness of your home, part of a meditative process or while being treated with chemotherapy or radiation. Visualization and imagery are self-healing techniques.
3. **SELF-OBSERVATION**: Learning to observe our thoughts is extremely helpful: If we can catch ourselves having negative thoughts, we can block them. Simply, repeat a word over and over such as “cancel”, “delete” or any other word that we want to insert between our unhealthy thoughts. This will prevent the negative, fearful thoughts that tend to recycle, without end. These anxiety-provoking thoughts, when prolonged, can lower the immune response. Positive, hopeful thoughts can enhance our healthy immune system.
4. **GOAL SETTING** has been found to further longevity. **MAKE TODAY COUNT!** Find something in each day that brings you Joy. The more we dwell in the past or fear the future, the more we will tend to suffer. Organic pain is treatable. The pain of suffering is not.
5. **FINISH UNFINISHED BUSINESS**. There is no time for resentments. They are simply energy depleting. Cancer brings into focus what is truly important: **FORGIVENESS and LOVE**.

6. Maintain the **ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE**: Appreciate and accept the gift of life that we were given. Also accept and appreciate yourself, as well as other people.
7. Be willing to have **FAMILY MEETINGS** so all those who are concerned with your illness can express their fears as well as their love.
8. The diagnosis of Cancer gives you permission to **say "NO"**! Please take care of yourself and stop worrying about what you "should do" or "could do" for another or even what others think about you. Take what you do well in life and apply that wisdom to your own health.
9. Ask your friends and family to see and **hold you in health**. Fear does not help you or them. Thoughts have energy.
10. **RENEW, CLARIFY**. Discover what you have learned about life as a result of your diagnosis. People who have experienced cancer can be teachers of the "well" and awaken within them what really matters in life: self, others and experiencing the experience.
11. Learn to say "**NO!**" to "stuff" and folks that deplete your energy.
12. Learn to **ASK FOR HELP**. We should also remember that allowing ourselves to **RECEIVE** is a gift for the giver.
13. **SPEND TIME IN NATURE**. Mother Nature heals.
14. Find peace in your **ALONE TIME**. It is within our aloneness that we can often find inner wisdom and/or reconnect to our spirituality.
15. If possible, do some type of **EXERCISE** such as walking and/or use various strength exercise bands to maintain muscle tone. Be sure to drink a lot of **WATER**, eat a **BALANCED DIET** and frequent showers to cleanse the skin.
16. **FEEL EMPOWERED**. You are in **CONTROL**. For example, keep a diary of your appointments and medications and if possible, bring someone to take notes.
17. If you love writing, keep a **JOURNAL**.
18. Analyze your **DREAMS**.
  - A) Write them down or tell them to someone
  - B) Give the dream a title
  - C) Sequentially what emotions were evoked?
  - D) Make the dream into a Chinese Proverb, beginning with "He who...", "She who..."
  - E) Personalize the proverb i.e., what does the proverb mean to you?
  - F) What has happened in the last 24-48hr. to give you this dream?
  - G) Give yourself an affirmation based on what the dream has taught you.
  - H) Take something from the dream to remind you of your affirmation

You can also make any unusual experience during the day into a dream and analyze it the same way.

**19. Discover the benefits of simple MEDITATION.**

A) Close your eyes

B) Put your hands in a prayer position

C) Slowly, very, very, slowly, in fact minutely, separate your hands.

D) With your eyes closed, estimate the space between your hands, always focusing on the space between your hands

E) When you sense your hands are parallel with your shoulders, slowly turn your palms up towards the ceiling and begin just as slowly and minutely to lower them until the top of your hands touch the top of your thighs.

F) Relax your shoulders and stay silently in this position, inhaling gently through your nose, allowing the breath to fill your abdomen.

G) Exhale slowly through your mouth, following your breath, inhaling through your nose, deep into your abdomen and out through your mouth.

H) Follow this procedure for at least ten to twenty minutes.

I) When you wish to return, slowly move your hands together in the original prayer position and when they touch, slowly open your eyes.

23. Cancer is often associated with depression. In order to diminish this occurrence: Be willing to change your beliefs and/or be willing to see a psychotherapist or counselor.

24. **Honor ALL of your feelings.**

25. **NURTURE** yourself on a daily basis.

26. Trust your powerful inner authority, intuition, and wisdom.

27. **CREATE** a community that will **SUPPORT** you. Be with those who make you feel joyful and at peace.

28. **POSITIVE THOUGHTS:** Thoughts shape form. **WHAT WE THINK IS WHAT WE BECOME.** Please do not refer to chemo or radiation as toxic. At The Center we refer to Chemotherapy as **LIQUID HOPE** and Radiation therapy as **RAYS of HOPE.**

29. **MESSAGE Of HOPE:** *Cancer it treatable.* For any condition that may be considered “incurable” now, a cure may be around the corner at any time.

It is our honor and privilege to work with you.

Blessings,

*San Diego Cancer Center Team*

San Diego Cancer Center: [www.sdcancer.com](http://www.sdcancer.com)

San Diego Cancer Research Institute: [www.sdcric.org](http://www.sdcric.org)

Please review the Integrative Medicine Calendar and the list of outstanding **Volunteers** who are also very dedicated to helping our patients.