

## Never Give Up!

This paper is dedicated to and suggested by Manny Hammelberg, prostate cancer survivor and leader extraordinaire of several support groups as well as a force in a number of related organizations.

I, too, am a prostate cancer survivor; however, my story has a little twist to it, which perhaps offers a different perspective which some with similar problems might find useful.

In November of 1995 I was diagnosed with a stage IV prostate cancer. My gleason number was 10, and my life expectancy was 6 to 12 months, based on the opinions of the principal oncologist at Dana Faber, Mass General and Tufts Medical Center. During the next 18 months I waged a personal war with the beast, through which time it continued to grow larger in the prostate, the seminal vesicles, and urinary tract. It also grew on the walls of my bladder nearly filling it and stopping all flow from my kidneys. Along with kidney failure I had profuse bleeding and clotting, severe pain and near continuous sleep deprivation. Having been summarily dismissed as hopeless by conventional medicine, my war focused primarily on the application of alternative treatment. I have previously written in some detail and will gladly share the story of my problem and my efforts during that 18 months after which all traces of the cancer from all locations left me, and I then became a healthier-than-ever cancer survivor. Assuming that this short background is sufficient, I'll now attempt to relate an ancillary aspect of my story, the one Manny would like to hear.

Having heard or read a great deal of what I went through and what I did, he has asked me to attempt to explain how one can become so totally motivated and how one can sustain that motivation, commitment and energy through thick and thin, given all the negative forces at work and an absolute, unappealable death sentence that one may face. I assume that because this is a mind and emotion issue, it could be best dealt with by a psychologist rather than an engineer; however, given that it's such a close, personal thing

it's probably appropriate that I should try to do it. Through God's grace I may find some thoughts and expressions that might be enlightening and I hope useful to those with similar problems or who seek a "formula" for greater self-motivation in any area of pursuit.

To begin with, I believe that I was more blessed than most in that I was set free by the verdict to take charge of my own fate rather than being filled with foolish false hopes by being offered any of the ineffective procedures that oncology offers to so many of the afflicted. Had I been offered that hope and those procedures, I certainly would have had nothing unusual here to relate, because I would have had no incentive to head in another direction, nor knowledge of, let alone confidence in, any alternative modalities. Instead, I had two choices. The first was to accept the informed and, no doubt, contextually accurate conclusions of the experts, settle my affairs (which I did), and fade away as comfortably as possible. The other choice was to educate myself on the issue and spend my last days trying to lengthen them if that were possible. Within the second choice, there are two paths, although I only saw one. The first was to approach the problem in a genteel way, let's say on a 9 to 5 basis, with vacations and holidays. The other one was the 100 hours a week way with no vacations until the project was finished, just the way I have always worked in my profession. In other words, it was a fight or fold decision. After that it was a choice of fight but hold your life style, or fight with everything you have. This last way boils down to a serious and literal application of nice sloganese words such as dedication, commitment, determination, resolution, etc., words which today are in such common use, but which are so rarely applied with conviction.

In thinking about this as I write, I prefer words which I find stronger and perhaps more appropriate and definable which I'll call the 4 P's. These are: Priority, Passion, Performance and Perseverance. I believe that the answer to Manny's question, at least in my own case, can be summarized by these four words in the following.

Priority:

Having made a choice to get well, or to stay well, or whatever else one is trying to do seriously, it must be assigned a priority in ones life. In my case and my circumstance I chose to make it my top priority in terms of commitment of time, energy and resources. I stripped my life to the bare essentials and eliminated peripheral interests in order to avoid compromising that priority. Nevertheless, these “bare essentials” did include continuing to work and to provide as was appropriate for my family.

Perhaps I can best explain this mental conditioning in the context of my work as an engineer, because this is the mindset under which I have operated most of my life when an important task had to be completed. I believe that it is nothing more than most people will do once they accept and formally commit to a challenge. When finally confronted with this problem it took on, in my head, the character of a major project which might have come into the office with a very short and firm deadline, a project that in this case so vital that failure to properly perform, and on time, would mean bankruptcy and total career collapse. Clearly this would be deserving of such a top priority. The problem however, is that there are often many competing forces which can dilute and weaken this type of top priority commitment. In this case, false hopes from encouraging research or rumors, rationalizations through wishful thinking, family influences, despondency, fear, resignation to the inevitable, etc. all worked to dilute or destroy priority. These are all enemies of any resolve to set and hold such a priority. They must be purged from the mind, and the priority set on a pedestal with homage paid to it daily.

The pedestal or support structure on which priority is to be placed must also be fashioned, molded and made strong enough to support the weight of that priority. Of course, the 9 to 5 priority is quite “lite” and doesn’t need a strong support structure. However, the one I’m referring to must be substantial. It is built on layer by layer of firm commitments, sort of like detailed New Year’s resolutions, but with sharp teeth that bite the conscience whenever, on a moment by moment basis, there is any backsliding. If ice cream and cake

are not allowed, that goes for your granddaughter's birthday party as well, no exceptions. Every break of a resolution is a crack, a weakening of the pedestal. It doesn't take many such cracks before the edifice crumbles and priority is reduced to just a word.

### Passion:

Passion is the keystone in the four P's arch. Without it, the arch will collapse. Passion is the fuel which keeps the machine running. Passion is an inoculation which protects against fear, self-pity, boredom, and even fatigue. It is how one sustains interest and commitment day and night, week after week, that is, by developing a passion for the task. Seek out interesting and where possible enjoyable elements and moments; make mental games out of menial tasks to overcome tediousness. Keep a number of facets of the project going at the same time so that when tiredness or boredom begin to manifest, drop that task and continue with another. This has remarkable rejuvenating power. I believe that passion can be nurtured and made to grow through even tiny successes and interesting discoveries. The world of alternative medicine is full of these, as one who studies the mass of relevant literature soon finds out. Passion is what creates a mind-set which won't let you stop or quit, because it insists on seeing what is over the next hill, and then the next and so on. Passion is father and nurturer of motivation; passion is the sustaining force responsible for most successes.

But how could I make a game out of a condition such as mine? What could possibly be interesting enough under these troubled conditions to elicit the mental/emotional structure which I am trying here to identify? It is difficult to offer relevant examples in this case without sounding quite weird, which no doubt I am. One that comes to mind, however, is the whole issue of blood clots. I found them quite fascinating. For many months, I could only urinate by inserting a catheter into my bladder. Invariably this would result in the extraction of a blood clot. This might simply precede the flow of urine, but it was usually too big to pass through and would plug the catheter, requiring multiple insertions. Sometimes I applied the syringe to the catheter and literally sucked the clot partially into it and then dragged it out with the catheter. Some of these were as big as chicken livers

and would appear to contain a sort of clear, but other times black fibrous tissue, which wasn't all blood. I assumed that it was tumor tissue. I would slice, examine, compare and save them to show my family. I even took one to my Urologist and also to my Naturopath. However, no one seemed to share my interest. I made a game out of seeing how big of a one I could retrieve. I never ceased to be amazed at how tough they were and especially how they could sometimes pinch down and pass through the urethra and then balloon into a fat liver shaped mass. Later when I had installed a "stay in" catheter and a bag, toward the end of the ordeal, one clot came out that was over six feet long, extruded through the clear plastic tube and into the bag. It was almost colorless with very little blood in it and very tough. I could hardly break it by pinching it through the plastic as it coiled up in the bag. This curiosity and interest did much, I believe, to dampen the accompanying pain and discomfort as well as the stress, which the unknown tends to foster. Again these are probably examples of weirdness to many. However, I suspect that those who may have similar experiences with this disease can relate to it in some respects and thereby can better see the point I'm trying to make.

#### Performance:

At some point, research, reading and planning must make way for performance. It is vital, of course, to learn and plan out a program before proceeding with any work. However, urgency demands a commitment of performance at an early date. I searched out relevant literature, read, studied, and evaluated for over two months before I ventured deeply into more complex and demanding protocols. Very early, however, the day after hearing my prognosis, I began modifying my diet and reducing or eliminating fats, meat, sugar, and all processed foods. I also began concentrating on fresh fruits and especially fresh-squeezed vegetable juices, as well as the more obvious and well-known supplements such as Co10, selenium, zinc, B-complex, etc. Researching, studying and trying various protocols is, of course, essential when proceeding blindly and innocently as in this case where the field is unknown, and uncertain even to the studied professional. In my case, I could afford to be what many would call quite careless, foolish, cavalier or even brave for venturing into unknown and possibly dangerous or fatal protocols. What

could be more fatal or dangerous than where I already was? When I refer here to performance, I mean choosing a plan of action, that is selecting some protocols and then applying them without delay, doing them with conviction, keenly observing results or lack thereof, and then moving on to others where appropriate. Actually I carried on a dozen or more at a time wherever I had no evidence that they might conflict with one another. I had neither time nor any real interest in determining which ones worked, only that something worked, and I tried without exception everything that I could learn of and get a hold of where benefits were claimed. I was free to do this with abandon because mistakes didn't matter to me in the long run, since it seemed that I had no long run. In this situation, sitting around waiting for something to happen or someone else to do something wouldn't do. It was all up to me to perform.

#### Perseverance:

This is a tough one. Difficulties, failures, progressive physical debilitating weakness, and discouragement can eat away perseverance. Under other circumstances, patience can help prop up perseverance. However, patience by definition consumes time, and there wasn't enough time. I believe that it is passion that feeds persistence, or perseverance. Finding reasons to be pleased with one's actions can also help. Without passion I don't believe one has a chance of accomplishing anything where extended perseverance is necessary. One must enjoy the challenge, and as I said earlier, look for any little pearls of interest, enjoyment and accomplishment, no matter how small, then amplify them in the mind, focus on them, remember them, and continue to seek more of them, for they are rewards of persistence and the substance of passion. One should apply pride where it can benefit, that is where it can cause one to try harder because it cannot tolerate failure, which quitting assures. Perseverance means never quitting. Once one quits, one has surely lost the battle. Until one quits, hope remains and the battle is not lost.

For now, I can think only of a few more points to make which I experienced or observed and which I pray will be useful to others.

1. Throughout this process, even though the cancer grew and spread, I felt that my body was growing healthier. As I look back, it seems evident that my efforts were improving the quality of my internal terrain, transforming it from a disease friendly condition, friendly to cancer in particular, to one unfriendly and even hostile to the cancer. In spite of all the pain, bleeding and other manifestations of the disease, I felt that the rest of me was getting younger and stronger. Therefore, the net result of my efforts during this period would seem to have been the erosion of the foundation on which the cancer had prospered and the breaking away of its grip, thus making it very vulnerable to the knock out punch that finally killed it.

During this period, I played a number of mental games as well as charted and kept records related to various factors. I always measured the rate and volume of flow, PH, color, and pain levels. I charted pain levels from 1 to 10 in intensity. Eventually the pain became 10+, then multiples of 10 plus, as the beast grew, invading new areas and further constricting flow. Attitude here was very important. I remember observing how blessed I was in one sense. You know how good it feels to crawl into bed exhausted, stretching out and instantly falling asleep? How many are privileged to repeat that sensation every 10 to 20 minutes all night every night?

2. As previously expounded, mental attitude was paramount in the healing process. Strange as it may seem, however, my basic underlying mind-set was not the one that you expect from what I have written. I have never been by nature an optimist. I feel my reputation is that of a prophet of doom. In my own mind I am simply a realist. Never throughout my ordeal did I try to convince myself nor did I believe that I would win the battle. Neither did I believe that I would lose it. I simply didn't know, nor did I waste any time thinking about it. However, I did know that only through total commitment and exceptional effort would it be possible to alter the verdict. There was no pre-game rah! rah! rah! There was no psyching up to artificially generate a winning attitude; it was simply, get to work,

- and give it all you have. I felt neither optimism nor pessimism, only a need to do a job as well as I could.
3. For whatever reason, I never felt fear, that is fear of suffering, or death. I don't know why; it seems unnatural but nevertheless true. There was but one brief exception where fear did enter my mind. It was around 3 AM in the morning, while I was engaged in my usual every 10 to 15 minutes of activity of this particular period, that of trying to urinate. After inserting the catheter up to my bladder at least 10 times without success, because of blood clots which continued to plug it, I began to fear that my bladder would surely burst. I, therefore, called my son Hal, who lives next door, and asked him to come over and take me to the hospital. However, before he got to me, or perhaps moments later, one or two more attempts to insert the catheter succeeded and it reached into the bladder without plugging and thereby relieved the pressure. There were hundreds of similar instances but none as severe or worthy of the anxiety that that episode generated.
  4. From my research I concluded that imaging could be a useful tool, although it was something that I never would consider until this experience, where nothing was excluded. I did use it frequently throughout my ordeal and do believe that it was beneficial. My applications of it were several. One was to imagine little Pac-Men being generated by my protocols. They would attack the tumor, kill parts of it, and then bring in dozers and dump trucks to haul away the dead cells. I really believe that there are significant influences that the mind can exert over body functions, and that imaging is a way to elicit that power and thus provide a very useful adjunctive therapy. I urge everyone in need to develop and apply it daily. There is a book called "Your Body Hears Everything You Say," and I believe that the statement is correct. Don't talk or even think about how bad you feel or how sick you are. Instead, talk to your body; tell it what you are doing to help it and how much you appreciate how hard it's trying. I am convinced from my own experiences that it actually helps.



There is one more, the most important factor of all in any quest of achievement, or in this case, for healing. I refrained from mentioning it until the end of this paper, because throughout my ordeal I was not aware of its influence or the fact that without it my efforts would have been futile. That factor was divine intervention. Up until I was whole again and the cancer was gone, I had no interest or regard for spiritual matters. A few months later however our Lord put His hand on me and I was suddenly blessed by the gift of faith, faith in the Gospel in Jesus and the Scriptures. It was then that I realized the Lord had intervened and saved me, prolonging my life for some purpose. This in itself is a wonderful story that I would gladly share with anyone interested.

As I look back, I realize that He has always been with me, even though I was not with Him. He had given me the guidance I needed to prevail in this endeavor. He provided me the passion and perseverance. He tempered my metal and strengthened me through the pain and suffering I endured. Throughout my life I was the epitome of self-reliance, independence and pride. Until a little over five years ago I believed that I personally and alone achieved whatever I achieved. Now I know that I am nothing without Him, I've accomplished nothing by myself, and I have no right to feel pride, but only gratitude for what the Lord has allowed me to do. Knowing what I know now, I would willingly suffer what I suffered 100 times more, if that was a price I would pay for the blessing of faith that I now have.

It was the Lord who saved me, not because of my prayers, because I gave Him none. He saved me for a purpose, which He has yet to reveal. Perhaps it was to write this paper. If you have a problem and want to solve it using the four P's, put the fifth "P" PRAYER ahead of the other four, and use it generously. Pray to the Lord, commit to Jesus, and stop fearing and worrying. I can't promise that He will heal you because He may have other plans for you, but I can absolutely assure you that you will spend eternity with Him in heaven. I know because that is His promise to all who sincerely believe.