



Staying in the Circle of Life

Ten Actions Survivors Can Take

(Material adapted from Cancer Transitions: Moving Beyond Treatment, a program of the Cancer Support Community and LIVESTRONG™)

1. **Stay in the moment.** Try to focus on dealing with only today's problems—take a deep breath and take one step at a time.
2. **Help others understand what you need.** Let friends and family know what would help you. Many people want to help but are unsure of what you want. Make specific suggestions, like: "Let's go to a movie," or "I need you to hold me and just listen while I talk," or "I could really use some help with the kids tomorrow when I have my appointment with the doctor."
3. **Acknowledge your feelings.** When you have cancer you can go through a lot of different emotions. Sometimes these emotions can be overwhelming. The first step to improving this feeling is to take time just to listen to your body. Listen to the things you are saying to yourself in your mind. Once you are more aware of your feelings you can find better ways to let the feelings out by talking, writing, physical activity or art. Some people are more private than others, but opening up to someone you trust can help.
4. **Do what you enjoy.** If you are still able to participate in activities you enjoyed before the diagnosis, keep doing them. Ask friends to join you or allow yourself to be alone when you need to be.
5. **Seek relaxation.** "Relaxation" refers to a calm, controlled state of your body that will enhance your well-being. The more you practice relaxation, the easier it becomes. Each of us can find ways to take relaxing breaks in our daily routine. Listen to some music that moves your spirit. Do a few stretches. Take time to enjoy some scenery. Consider joining a relaxation or meditation program in your community. Even watching your favorite TV show can put you in a relaxed state. Just a few minutes a day can help.
6. **Retain as much control of your life as is reasonable.** If you feel that you have lost control to health professionals, loved ones or even the disease itself: list things you feel you have lost control of—then decide what you can realistically take back. Even the simplest things can help enhance your sense of control.

7. **Maintain a partnership with your doctor.** Aim for ongoing open communication and never stop asking questions through the period of follow-up care and into the future.
8. **Be a Patient Active Survivor.** If you feel better about your choices, you will improve the quality of your life.
9. **Spend time with other cancer survivors.** People with cancer often find a sense of comfort in communicating with others who share their experiences: in person, online or by phone. Cancer support organizations, such as TWC and LAF, can help you connect with other cancer survivors.
10. **Hope for many things.** Hope is desirable and reasonable. There are millions of people in the world today for whom cancer is just a memory. Even if your cancer recovery is complicated, you can find small goals and pleasures in your life. Get tickets to a concert. Look forward to a Bible study class. Make a special effort to be present for a family event, like a birthday or anniversary of someone you love. Look forward to your hair growing back. People who find something that gives them hope are often better equipped to handle whatever challenges lie ahead. Talk about what gives you hope and what you hope for, now and in the future.