

Natural Healing Express Weekly

Column 277 Widower's Journey Through Cancer, Part 1

First of all, cancer sucks. It just plain sucks. For all of us who have lost someone to this terrible disease, well....Godspeed. For those families stilling fighting it, keep strong. We all fight with you. Most of you who know me are aware of my two dear friends lost to cancer. You will always be in my heart Rita Lobdell and Judy Warren. You are both angels and your fight was courageous.

So, when a client comes to me for help regarding cancer, it strikes a special accord. I feel it is my duty to come along side of them and fight to the best of my ability and resources. And, a lot of times, we win. Maybe we do not ultimately win the war, but we fight for the gift of time. When you are up against this demon, each minute is special.

The following is a story regarding the journey of two of my clients through cancer. It is written from the husband's perspective as they battled together. John, the author, has graciously agreed to share his wife's eulogy which has lessons for us all, many which are faith related. Although John gave me the gift of literary editing, I chose not to change ONE WORD. Thank you, John, for this amazing writing. And to Judy, may many people learn from you and your battle. You are loved and missed.

Thank you very much for joining with us today. And thank you to those who shared from your hearts about Judy. This is where she grew up, and it's where we were married in 1981.

I want to share with you how the Lord and Judy taught me patience and how to trust in the Creator of the Universe. The hardest part of, "Be still and know that I am God," is to be still. I had always been a take-charge kind of guy, developing my teaching skills to motivate students to put on public seminars, with no guarantees of success unless everyone worked together. This method was not part of the traditional way, so I had to be organized and forward-thinking, because when unexpected problems arose, I had to respond quickly and then move on to guide my students to achieve their greater goal. I became comfortable in this role and, if nothing else, I grew in the notion that in my own strength I could be ready for the unexpected, and that my insights and decisions would never be far from just what was needed at the time. That was then.

When Judy was diagnosed in September, 2015 with Stage 4 renal carcinoma, I kicked into my take-charge mode and began planning and organizing. One evening I sat alone in our living room, as Judy was still at the hospital, and I asked the Lord to keep her here because, well, she had always paid the bills, knew all the passwords, balanced the check book, did the taxes and knew how to run the washing machine. I needed her here. Then I opened to my Daily Bread reading for the day. It focused on Jesus in the Garden before He was crucified. The passage from Luke 22:41 leapt off the page as I read it. Jesus said, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Yours, be done."

I realized in that moment that I was asking the Lord to keep Judy here because that's what I wanted, so that MY will would be done. I instantly became convicted of my selfishness, fell to my knees and buried my face in the sofa. I asked the Lord for His forgiveness. I then blurted out the most difficult sentences I had ever uttered. I cried, "Lord, I trust You completely, and I give my wife over to You. I put her into Your hands. Not My will, but Yours, be done."

As I rose to wipe my face, a calmness began to settle over me. I had never felt such a peace. Looking back on it, nothing in or of this world could have provided what I was experiencing. I attribute it to the Lord of Hosts.

After Judy was released from the hospital, we talked about whether we should consider moving, and that's when I once again shifted into my take-charge mode. I had it all figured out: we would sell our home in Peosta, move back to Dubuque and buy a condo, rid ourselves of a lot of stuff we had acquired over the years, and get it all done before the snow flew. Our realtor kept a steady supply of images streaming to our inbox, but nothing was move-in clean or cozy. This was going to be a lot of work.

Sitting with me at the computer gazing at the photos one night, Judy softly stirred me out of my disposition. "You know, we're here," she said. "The house is the way we like it, it meets our needs, and staying here we avoid a lot of extra expense, time and effort." She was right. And through her, the Lord showed me I could let go of my need to control things. The Voice that calmed the sea was beginning to calm the storm in me.

We began to pray together with a different attitude. How many times in the past had we said, "Lord, we'd like A, B, C, and D if it is in Your will." We agreed we would no longer ask for anything, but wanted the Lord to know that we desired what He wanted for us. His will be done. My peace slowly but steadily grew.

It seems that in the last several months, we had to make many important decisions with very little time for deliberation with family or friends. The one late night I was told Judy had small tumors in her brain and needed to go to Iowa City right away is a time I will never forget, not because of its shuddering shock, but because of the way the Lord settled my soul. I had never faced driving to Iowa City before, and was really terrible at directions, but as the emergency room attendant handed me a map of the sprawling University of Iowa hospitals and clinics, I sensed the Lord saying, "Here you go. Just trust me and you'll get there." He was blessing me with His peace.

In the weeks just before Judy's going home to be with the Lord, some might argue I could have made different, if not better decisions, but then recently I read another passage in my Daily Bread from Romans 8 that says in verse 28, "...In all things God works for the good of those who love Him..." I then realized the Lord would cause all of our earthly circumstances to align themselves with His divine plan. He was taking Judy's illness and causing it to work for His glory. No decisions we made - good or bad - would ever threaten His overall perfect design for our lives.

Who are we to think we could have done it better?

*At this point I believe it is necessary to address the fact that I told people I believed that God told me He was going to heal Judy. Looking back on it, He knew it was more important for me to know **THAT** He would heal her, rather than to know **how or when** He would do it. In Luke 7:6-7, the Roman centurion whose faith impressed Jesus said to Him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof... But say the word, and my servant will be healed." As the Lord had moved in the centurion's life 2,000 years ago, He was now moving in mine.*

*When I asked the Lord to help rid me of particular, sad memories of Judy's last days that Satan used to make me question whether there was more I could have done, or could have done differently, He reminded me of His promise by prompting me to think of her the way she is **now** with Him when some church friends wrote in their sympathy card that Judy was "Happy, healed, whole." **He kept His promise.** And I will simply add that she is "home." I also take great comfort in a song written by Danny Gokey that the Lord led me to, whose lyrics offered further comfort as they encouraged me to look to the future:*

*"Tell your heart to beat again, close your eyes and breathe it in,
Let the shadows fall away, step into the light of grace.
Yesterday's a closing door, you don't live there any more.
Say goodbye to where you've been, and tell your heart to beat again."*

*Knowing this precious promise from the Lord, I struggled less and less within my soul. Nudging me to listen to a most unlikely radio show airing at a most unlikely hour of the night, the Lord also helped me understand this issue from yet another perspective - **His.***

Part Two will follow next week! Also, the Café is now named – It is called the Silver Fox Broth and Tea Company and is open Tuesdays through Fridays 6:30am to 2:00pm and Saturdays 8:00am to 2:00pm. However, most days he is still around after two, so if you would like items to take home for dinner, just give a call to 815 990 8732! The chef is happy to oblige! Also, many people are calling in on their way to work and having the order delivered curbside! What a great service for this local area. Silver Fox- Healthy Gourmet Food, Delicious and Fast.

Enjoy! Hope to see you soon and as always, please contact us via one of the following methods. Natural Healing Express: Phone 815 990 8732, email: skscham@aol.com 204 W Main St, Lena, IL 61048.

Website: www.naturalhealingexpress.com Facebook: Natural Healing Express

