

# The Way of the Cancer Warrior

34 Strategies for Your Cancer War



Nate Miyaki

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## *34 Strategies For Your Cancer War*

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# BOOK I

## THE BATTLEFIELD

## **1. The Attack**

Cancer has launched an all out attack on my family. It has taken lives, caused suffering and sorrow, and dragged some of the people I love the most into the pits of hell. We've experienced the pain and hardship it can cause. We understand the fear, frustration, and despair that can take over your life. We know just how much this ruthless disease can take from you.

And you? The diagnosis has been made. The plan has been set. No matter how much you'd like to, you can't change the reality of the situation. You have no choice but to dig down deep, face your challenge, and fight back. This is the only way you will reclaim what is rightfully yours, something that we all too often take for granted – a normal life. Maybe, with a newfound warrior spirit, it will become extraordinary.

You are not alone in this battle. We have a common enemy, one that transcends all cultural and social barriers. For this is a worldwide attack. If we don't stand side-by-side in this fight, we are all doomed. We must show cancer it messed with the wrong family, with the wrong group of friends. If they dare attack us and the one's we love, we are attacking back with ruthless aggression, with no mercy.

The battle has now entered your home. The only question is this -- will you fight or will you flee?

## 2. Heroes Fight Back

My wife's father battled prostate and kidney cancer for years. He fought hard, inspired many, and became a legend. My sister is battling kidney and stomach cancer. Her life has been turned completely upside down. Yet she faces every challenge with a smile. Two friends crushed the initial attack of leukemia at a very young age. They've gone on to do great things in their lives.

In 2009, my dad was diagnosed with stage-4 throat cancer. His life was changed in an instant. He went from one day planning his upcoming fishing trip to the next day fighting for his life.

The doctors prescribed an intensive treatment protocol -- daily radiation sessions combined with chemotherapy infusions. He had a feeding tube inserted into his stomach because he could no longer eat solid food.

I don't know if hell exists, and if it does what it's like, but watching my dad go through his treatment sure gives me a good idea. He experienced most of the general side effects associated with cancer treatment: hair loss, muscle loss, fatigue, depression, gastrointestinal distress, rashes, aches, pains, etc. He also had symptoms specific to throat cancer: painful throat sores that made it difficult to eat or swallow, loss of all sense of taste. I might as well stop there and tell you what he didn't experience -- any semblance of a normal life.

I visited my dad every weekend during his treatment. As time progressed I could see his symptoms getting worse and his body deteriorating, but nevertheless he persevered.

One weekend I showed up and I could tell something was different. As I sat across from my dad and looked into his eyes, I knew immediately that the worst thing possible was happening -- his spirit was breaking. The human body can take almost anything, but if your spirit collapses, all is lost. My Dad's words that day confirmed what my gut instinct was telling me. He told me things were so bad that he was going to quit.

My immediate responses were probably very typical of someone in that situation. I said things like, "You can't quit. You're halfway through. Don't give up. I love you too much to lose you."

I went home that night and knew I had to do something more. He wasn't going to change his mind just because I wanted him to. Somehow, some way, he was going to have to find some personal motivation from within to persevere, and continue struggling on through this epic battle. As much as I wanted to, I couldn't step in and do it for him. As Bruce Lee once said, "there is no help but self-help". I knew I had to find a way to help my dad make it through these tough times, to find his fight. I also knew superficial, cliché statements weren't going to cut it.

I stayed up all night, and wrote him the following letter straight from the heart. I apologize in advance for the frequent use of the word shit in this letter. It was an emotionally charged, shitty time:

*Hey Dad,  
Sorry to hear you've had a rough couple of days. I think in the back of our minds we were all hoping we'd get lucky and you'd just breeze through this. But I guess reality is setting in and, as the*

*doctors told you, it is going to be a rough road. I wish there was something we could do for you, man. But for now, I guess all we can do is offer you some words of encouragement.*

*Maybe something that will help is to keep in mind the end goal of this whole process, and that's to get you back to your normal life before all of this crap started. You have a great life — a fun/exciting family, cute grandchildren, poker games with the boys, wild house parties, fishing with your friends, and vacations with C.M.*

*You're not going through this shit just for the hell of it right? You're fighting a tough battle to save your life. Some people live boring lives and don't have very much going on for them, so they have nothing to fight for when a challenge like this arises. But you do. You have a lot of wonderful things in your life that can give you the motivation to keep pushing through when the going gets tough.*

*Obviously this treatment sucks, and it sounds like it's going to get worse before it gets better. If you just continue to focus on how bad the side effects are and how shitty you feel, you are going to get more and more discouraged and it will ultimately crush your spirit.*

*I realize none of us can really know what you are going through right now, and it's easier said than done, but you have to focus on how the treatment is going to get you back to the life that you know and love. Although it's hard to see, your struggles now are what is going to get you back to the good times that lie ahead.*

*So while you are going through this, try to remember what you're fighting for. When you're feeling like shit, think about the next vacation you want to take — hey, aren't you supposed to come with us to Hawaii?*

*When you're feeling nauseous, think about how much fun all of the drama leading up to W.M.'s wedding is going to be and how many jokes we'll get to crack at his expense.*

*When you're feeling like you just can't take another day of this crap, think about the wild holiday parties we always have. Another round of them will be here before you know it. Lulu and Mars are growing up fast. It will be a lot of fun to see how T.M. and L.M. try to control them.*

*Packer-man caught a lot of fish this year in your place. You can't let him show you up like that. You have to go back up to Alaska next year and break all the records.*

*I think you and I are a lot alike. I don't believe in passively relying on anyone to get me through things. I believe you have to proactively find your own way and rely on your own strength. Your mindset can make or break you through tough times. Think about the life you are trying to get back to, and that will give you the strength you need to keep going as the treatment gets tougher.*

*You've done it before, way worse than this, right? You had to work two jobs from sun up to sun down and sleep on your friend J.J.'s couch to try to survive while paying for a bunch of kids your ex wouldn't even allow you to see. Even worse, the kids you were paying for didn't appreciate it at the time.*

*That must have sucked and been really hard on you, but you were strong and struggled through. And look what it eventually brought you. We've all reconnected, all of your kids realized the sacrifices you made for them, and we have a great family that brings a lot of fun times. The payoff is always greater than the struggle, as bad as the struggle can be, but sometimes you can't see that as you're going through it.*

*I know this is a petty example in comparison to what you are going through, but I've worked with a lot of people over the years in my training business and I've seen firsthand how important the mind and spirit can be in achieving your goals and getting through life's challenges. A positive attitude is necessary to accomplish anything, especially something that is difficult. The body follows the mind and spirit, and if they are beaten, the game is over no matter what you try to do. No matter what's*



*happening to you physically, you have to stay strong mentally and spiritually. I'm sure that doctors and other cancer survivors would agree.*

*Your current goal is to get through this treatment, but I can also see that right now your spirit is down. The treatment is bad, but it's temporary, and you only have a few more weeks to go. But we have a lot of great times ahead of us as a family, and that will last for years to come. Remember that, focus on that, and maybe, just maybe, the side effects won't seem as bad.*

*If you ever need someone to talk to while you're going through this, just give me a call, I'll be there in a second. I'm the last person you have to put on a fake happy face for or try to pretend like everything is OK. You don't have to "entertain" me or be good company. If you need to complain to someone about how shitty this is, express your fears, or even just cry to let things out, I'm a good listener. One of the best things J.D. has taught me is that it's not good to bottle up and hold things inside, you feel much better when you let it out.*

*We love you, we're thinking about you, and we're always around when you need someone.*

*Love,  
Nate*

To make a long story short, my dad didn't quit, he persevered, he struggled, he sacrificed, he fought through it all, and he finished his treatment. Somewhere along the way, he found his reason to fight. Patients with his specific condition last on average 6 months. As I write this, it is nearly 4 years later.

What have been some of his rewards for beating the odds? He got to stand by his son's side as the best man at his wedding. He got to help two of his other sons overcome some personal struggles, get back on their feet, see them kick butt in their careers, and know that they were going to be OK moving forward. He got to watch his favorite baseball team win the World Series. He got to spend valuable time with his grandchildren, watch them grow up, and develop their own personalities. He got to celebrate his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends and family that flew in from around the world. He got to take one last trip with his wife. He got to motivate everyone else around him to face his or her own struggles in life. And in this son's eyes, he grew from a great man into a legend that will inspire forever. None of this would have been possible if he had given up.

Unfortunately, my dad is down to clinical trial studies that have some pretty nasty side effects. He recently had emergency surgery to remove cancerous blood trapped inside his heart and lungs, and a trachea tube inserted to help him breathe. Yet he keeps putting one foot in front of the other and marching on. He wants a few more memories to take with him when he goes.

I hope you do too.

### **3. A New Hero Rises**

*When man comes to a conscious vital realization of those great spiritual forces within himself, and begins to use those forces in science, in business, and in life, his progress in the future will be unparalleled. – Striking Thoughts.*

Most of us don't know how strong we can be, how much we can accomplish, and how we can rise to the occasion when the stakes truly matter. Sometimes it takes life backing you into a corner to force you to look inside, find the warrior within, and let him or her out.

If you're dealing with cancer, I don't have to tell you about the gut-wrenching physical and emotional challenges you are currently facing: symptoms and side effects outside of your own control; the feeling that your own body is rebelling against you; the frustrating see-saw of good and bad days; wishing things were back to normal and your fate had fallen upon someone else; alternating optimism and hope with doubt and despair; the constant battle between wanting to live and feeling so sick that giving up sounds like your only true option; the fear of dying and what's next; the fear of living but no longer being anything like you were before your diagnosis or treatment; worrying about what will happen to your family when you are gone.

All of that building up inside can either cripple you, or can be used to crush your enemy. Somehow, you must find a way to take all of that fear, doubt, and frustration; convert it into positive energy and action; and unleash it against your opponent. It is clear that cancer has underestimated the power of the human spirit in general, and yours in particular. You should not make the same mistake.

Champions, heroes, and legends are made, not born. In most superhero stories, the hero starts out as just an ordinary man or woman. He or she is thrust into battle -- most of the time against his or her will -- and only becomes the hero by dealing with the circumstances, overcoming extraordinary challenges, and conquering the villain.

You have the opportunity now to conquer the greatest villain this life has to offer. Are you ready to rise to the occasion and win?

#### **4. How to Use This Book in Your War**

Each strategy starts with a few quotes. As you fight, I want you to have the most powerful weapons possible at your side. I believe these are just that -- simple words of wisdom that will remain with you long after this book is gone. You will be able to call upon them for motivation when you need it most. Following the quotes, we focus on the practical steps to take in order to apply them in battle.

*\*Quotes courtesy of Tuttle Publishing*

##### **1. Find and apply the strategies that resonate with you.**

Some strategies will be relevant to your personal situation and style. Some will not. Focus only on those that connect with you personally, and help motivate you to take action, fight your fight, and win your war. Ignore the rest.

##### **2. Write down and use your own strategies as well.**

I encourage you to write down your own motivational quotes, sayings, and strategies as well. Use the resources and experiences you've been exposed to in your own life. There is no greater education than self-education. There is no greater help than self-help. There are no weapons more powerful than the ones that come from within.

## **5. Dedication**

This book is dedicated to Jerry Miyaki – the best friend, mentor, role model, warrior, hero, and dad a guy could have ever asked for.

## BOOK II

### THE STRATEGIES

## **1. Take Personal Accountability in Your Fight**

*There is nothing outside of yourself that can ever enable you to get better, stronger, richer, quicker, or smarter. Everything is within. Everything exists. Seek nothing outside of yourself.*  
~ Miyamoto Musashi

*The medicine for my suffering I had within me from the very beginning, but I did not take it. My ailment came from within myself, but I did not observe it – until this moment. Now I see that I will never find the light unless, like the candle, I am my own fuel.*  
~ Bruce Lee

Maybe your family, your friends, your boss, your colleagues, and even the world around you will let you get away with acting helpless and powerless to your situation in life. Cancer WILL NOT. This despicable enemy preys on such weakness and lack of courage, and doesn't care about your excuses for staying on the sidelines in the game of life. You have to decide — will you forfeit or will you fight?

### **1. The only way to have a chance at winning is to fight.**

Although you will have people at your side cheering you on, no one can step inside the ring, take your place, and fight for you. You will have to rise to the challenge, take a few punches, close your fists, and swing back.

As we crossed into Y2K, our society lost something. We became a bunch of entitled whiners. Everyone has it better or easier than us. They just know the right people or have the insider secrets. If only we had it the same. “If only,” is something we think to ourselves far too often. It couldn't possibly be that they are taking personal accountability for their lives, busting butt, and chasing after their goals and dreams. Or could it?

Marketing material feeds this laziness. It tells us what we *want* to hear instead of what we *need* to hear. As a result, many of us find ourselves conditioned to expect something for nothing — get rich quick, lose fat fast, meet your soul mate tomorrow, etc.

We've lost that ability to strive, to sacrifice, to set goals, to do everything possible to achieve them, and to never waver in their pursuit. We'll take a pill. We'll take ten pills. But we won't change our daily habits. Sorry, my friend. The infomercial mentality doesn't cut it when you're in a REAL fight for your life. You can't rely on magic tricks. You must use grit.

### **2. Don't wait for a savior to solve all of your problems for you.**

The sands of time are ticking away and there is no stopping them. You can't just sit around and wait for a savior to solve all of your problems for you. You must accept personal responsibility and learn to solve them for yourself.

I hope I'm not offending anyone. Not waiting on a savior has nothing to do with religion or spiritual faith. What you believe in is everything to you. I understand that.

Whatever gives you strength, faith, confidence, conviction, and inner peace, I respect and am a strong proponent of. Use it.

But the truth is that cancer does not care about your soul. It cares about your body. So the key to success is to look at your battle as a team effort. My mom is hardcore Irish Catholic. One of her favorite sayings is, “God helps those who help themselves.” My dad is Japanese and is cut from the cloth of the samurai, “*Respect the gods without counting on their help.*”

What’s the common thread in these diverse spiritual paths? You!

### **3. Your fight against cancer starts and ends with what YOU do.**

A coach can design the game plan and call the plays. But you, and only you, can run them on the field. You must be the leader, the quarterback, and the most valuable player. The coach has to stay on the sidelines. The fans can only watch from the stands. You’re the one on the battlefield of life that has to face your foe — and everything it is going to throw at you — head-on.

So although you will be getting treatment from your doctors, support from your family and friends, and the rest of the world and I will be cheering for you, YOU must be proactive and take personal accountability for your fight against cancer.

**If you are going to win, it must start from within.**

## **2. Know What You Are Fighting For**

*What would you do if you were attacked by a thug? Would you stand your ground and fight it out? Or, if you will excuse me, would you say that you would run like hell? But what if your loved ones were with you? What then? That's the all-important question.*  
~ Bruce Lee

*The warrior does not depend on anything but himself to beat the enemy... Only through a constant search from within, based on one's own lifestyle, can the truth be known. It is absolutely a personal thing. Commercialism does nothing to enhance the reality of truth.*  
~ Miyamoto Musashi

There are 34 strategies in this book. Some may help you. Some may not. So be it. There is only one — this strategy — that is truly non-negotiable. If you only absorb and apply one piece of information from this book, I hope that it is this. The true key, the secret to your success in your battle against cancer — and in fitness, business, finances, and in anything else in life — is this:

### **1. Know what you are fighting for.**

Until you find what you are truly fighting for, all remaining strategies will be meaningless.

If you haven't seen the movie *Cinderella Man*, you should. It's a great inspirational story. But for our purposes now, here's the brief synopsis: It tells the "true story" of James Braddock, a former up and coming boxer who retires due to injury. He works as a day laborer to support his family during the Great Depression. Having lost all of his possessions and savings and unable to pay the bills, he gets an opportunity to return to the ring in a last-chance effort to save his family. *Cinderella Man* tells his comeback story.

Some quotes show us the spirit of the movie. During his comeback, Braddock is pitted against a fighter that beat him earlier in his career. In the middle of this rematch, Braddock is winning. In between rounds, the opponent and his coach have an exchange:

*Trainer: What are you doing? You beat this guy easy last time.*  
*Fighter: He ain't the same guy.*

Braddock had watched his family starve and suffer. Fueled by more than personal ego, vanity, or even mere competition, Braddock becomes a different animal in the ring, fighting for survival. He somehow finds a way to beat younger, stronger, heavier, and more skilled boxers. He even beats those he had previously lost against.

When asked by a reporter how the impossible became possible, Braddock gives a simple answer:

*This time around, I know what I'm fighting for.*

### **2. Personal motivation will help you persevere through all obstacles.**



The mind is infinitely more powerful than the body. The body will do whatever the mind commands it to do. The right motivation is the key to digging down deep, giving your all, and fighting until the end. It will keep pushing you forward through the ups and downs. It will help you embrace your challenge with courage, instead of complaining about your fate like a coward.

I don't know what your motivation is, my friend. Ultimately, you're going to have to take some personal accountability, look at your life, look inside yourself, and come to your own conclusions.

1. Is it that there are some things in this world that you've left undone?
2. Is it that you had fallen into the trap of taking your life for granted and now want more time to live with passion and conviction?
3. Is it that you want more time with your family and friends?
4. Is it that you have more to accomplish? Do you have something great to offer the world before you leave it?
5. Is it that you are offended that this stupid disease dared attack you, and you want to show it that it messed with the wrong person?
6. Is it that you want to be an inspiration to others?

Part of finding your fighting spirit goes back to the first principle: realizing that you can't always rely on someone else or wait for a savior to solve all of your problems. You have to find your reason(s) to get off your butt, fight, and solve your problems yourself.

I'm not saying that knowing your personal motivation will make the road any easier. Success is never easy — that's the point. There will be ups and downs, adversity, and setbacks. There will be days where you'll absolutely want to quit. But when you know what you're fighting for, you **will** find a way to persevere.

This is life, my friend, not some movie I'm quoting. The obstacles are infinite. Fairy tale endings don't come true just because you want them to. Good endings are earned. That's why it's critical that you find a true reason to keep fighting through the challenges instead of just repeating a cliché slogan with no true emotions.

**The right reason to fight will fuel your fire forever.**

### **3. Know Your Enemy**

*When you understand yourself and you understand the enemy you cannot be defeated.  
~ Miyamoto Musashi*

The greatest warriors studied their adversaries. They knew the enemy's tactical strategies, skills, philosophies, and their weaponry down to the very last detail. They left nothing to chance. They carefully planned every attack and counterattack based on the knowledge of the opponent. They knew the advantages and disadvantages of everything. They did all of that to gain the greatest chance at victory BEFORE the battle had even started.

The most successful athletes and coaches use the same strategy. They look at statistics and scouting reports in order to gain information they can use to their advantage during competition. They watch hours of game film on their competitors in order to learn strategies for counter-acting their competition's strengths and exploiting their weaknesses. The modern sports competition isn't just a battle of physical skills; it's also a battle of intelligence and strategy. More often than not, the winners are the ones who prepare the most.

#### **1. Learn everything you can about the opponent you face.**

The cancer warrior needs to study their opponent. They need to know their enemy inside and out if they are to have the best chance at beating the disease. Learn everything about the cancer you face:

1. *What type of cancer is it?*
2. *What cells or systems is it attacking?*
3. *What are the symptoms?*
4. *What side effects can you expect from each treatment?*
5. *What are the different treatment options?*
6. *What are the specific goals of those treatment options?*
7. *What are the advantages and disadvantages of those options?*
8. *What are some pain management strategies?*
9. *What dietary, exercise, or lifestyle changes can help your treatment?*
10. *What resources can you use to deal with the psychological and emotional sides of your battle?*

You need to know about everything that can and will happen to you and what you can do to retaliate, so you can best be prepared to fight. Only those who have not studied their enemies are met with the unexpected surprises that could sabotage their battle plan. Have a plan A, B, and C so there is no hesitation on the battlefield, regardless of what circumstances arise.

#### **2. Use every tool at your disposal to be prepared.**

How can you best learn, and be prepared?

1. Ask your doctors, nurses, and healthcare providers questions.
2. Read books.
3. Research on the Internet (from credible sources only).
4. Talk to other patients.
5. Find out the secrets and strategies of other cancer survivors.
6. Seek the help of qualified professionals.
7. Tell your circle your story. It seems as if everyone knows someone who has battled cancer, and another person may be able to connect you with someone.
8. Join a cancer support group.
9. Contact a cancer society or foundation and ask for resources.
10. Ask your family and friends to help you in this process.

However, keep this in mind. You must walk into battle informed, but you should defer to your captain (your head physician) when there is discrepancy or doubt. Despite that, the reality remains: the more you know about your enemy, the better your chances are of conquering them.

**Knowledge stacks the odds in your favor.**

#### **4. Use All of Your Weapons**

*It does not look at combat from a certain angle but from all possible angles, and although JKD utilizes all ways and means to serve its end (after all, efficiency is anything that scores), it is bound by none and is, therefore, free from all ways and means.  
~ Bruce Lee*

*In a combat situation you must understand how to make complete use of your weapons. Any other reasoning is foolish. If you are going to die in battle then you should do so with the utmost respectability and dignity. It is a terrible shame to die in battle with your sword undrawn.  
~ Miyamoto Musashi*

Once you know your enemy, you can and should use every possible weapon at your disposal to defeat them. Like a carpenter, you should learn how to use the right tool for the right job. Maybe the appropriate tools change as your treatment progresses, your state-of-mind changes, or with feedback on how your body is responding. Evaluate all of the variables, assess the progress, and then adapt accordingly.

##### **1. Use all of the resources available to win.**

The long sword, the short sword, the canon, the bow and arrow — here are some cancer weapons you can use in their place:

1. Your doctor prescribed treatment plan
2. A supporting nutrition plan
3. A supporting exercise routine
4. Alternative, holistic, or healing treatments
5. Massage, yoga, stretching, meditating, or any other “feel good” or stress-relief activities
6. Motivational or inspirational materials including books, blogs, movies, articles
7. Therapy that gives you targeted mental, psychological, and emotional support and strategies
8. Family support

Whatever weapons you choose, run it by your lead doctor. Make sure they are aligned, and not conflicting, with your main treatment approach.

But with a green light, throw the kitchen sink at cancer. Don't judge what is traditional or what is non-traditional, what you have experience in or what is completely new to you. Only use what is useful given the task at hand.

**With your life on the line, you must win by any means necessary.**

## **5. Set SMART Goals**

*To strive actively to achieve some goals gives your life meaning and substance...if you don't aim at an object, how the heck on earth do you think you can get it?*

*~ Bruce Lee*

Setting goals is a powerful tool that can be used in almost every aspect of our lives -- self-improvement, career advancement, educational development, athletic achievement, relationship communication, financial control, and of course, the cancer battle.

Those who have never used goals for guidance or motivation tend to write them off as self-help nonsense. Those who have experienced their power set and monitor goals on a regular basis to maximize their potential.

All achievement starts with goals. You have to know where you want to go first before you have a chance of reaching that final destination. Setting goals helps us block out life's distractions and narrow our focus to a specific task at hand. It helps us set priorities in our lives. It gives us the power to tap into our energies and abilities and use them to maximum effect.

Goals provide us with specific reasons for performing our daily actions. Without goals we often wander from moment to moment, task to task without a purpose. We end up spinning our wheels, stuck in the same spot as weeks, months, and years past, with no real accomplishments to show for it. Actively striving to achieve our goals propels us forward and upward to new heights, and gives our lives true meaning. And in this case, it will help you fight for your life.

### **1. Learn from elite athletes.**

Athletes and coaches understand the power of goal setting. In the off-season or at the start of the season, players and teams set specific goals for the upcoming year. They then set a specific plan of action to achieve those goals. It could be to win a championship or to break personal records.

Ambitious goals motivate them to work hard and push through the rigors of the competitive season. It helps them battle back from tough losses, push through when their bodies are beat up and worn down, and keep going when they want to quit. It gives them an underlying reason to make the sacrifices necessary to be an elite athlete. Can you see the many ways that this would equally apply to the cancer battle?

### **2. Set S.M.A.R.T. goals for your treatment plan.**

The cancer warrior can benefit greatly from setting personal goals related to their battle with the disease. To "finish treatment" or "to become cancer-free" is not enough. These goals are too vague and get lost in the reality of the day-to-day treatment process. That's the overall mission of course, but you need more specific, measurable goals. Have you ever heard of the term SMART goals? SMART is an acronym used to describe a specific type of goal. SMART stands for goals that are:

**S**pecific

**Measurable**  
**Achievable**  
**Realistic**  
**Time Framed**

SMART goals tend to be effective at getting the most out of people because of their specific characteristics.

A specific goal forces you to think about what you really want or need to achieve. It doesn't allow you to be vague or indecisive about your true desires or duties.

Measuring progress towards that goal keeps you on track. It gives you a tool to see how successful your daily actions are at getting you closer to your goals. It helps you evaluate the effectiveness of your action plan.

Make sure your goals are realistic and achievable. You are more likely to actively pursue goals that are attainable. You aren't going to work towards a goal that you know you can't achieve. That type of goal ends up shoved into a drawer and forgotten forever.

Set a definitive time frame within which to achieve your goals. This keeps your goals in the forefront of your mind. It forces you to work towards them on a daily basis. You can't procrastinate or push them off like we do with most things in our lives. There's no starting over tomorrow when you set specific deadlines.

So what are some of your SMART goals for your battle with cancer? I can't really tell you what those should be because each plan of action is unique to your individual situation and treatment option. But I can tell you a more few strategies to make sure you are actively pursuing those goals.

### **3. Write your goals down.**

These days, people talk a lot, but do very little. It's not what you think, read, analyze, or say, its what you DO in this world that makes a difference. Writing your goal down is the first step in taking it out of the world of meaningless words, and putting it into the world of meaningful action. It's right there in front of you on a damn piece of paper, and you actively put it there.

### **4. Place your goals where you can see them every day.**

It's too easy to get lost, sidetracked, or distracted in this hectic world. You need to keep your goals in the forefront of your mind at all times if you have any chance at success.

Put your goals up in a place where you will see it multiple times a day to remind you of its importance: on your desk, as your computer screensaver, in your calendar (paper or electronic), on your fridge, on your front door, or on your bathroom mirror. You can even set it to come up as an alarm or reminder on your cell phone.

### **5. Tell at least one other person about your goals.**

The more people you tell the better, but you need to share your goal with at least one other person. This holds you accountable to someone, and forces you to actively

pursue your goal. If you keep your goals a secret, you have no one to call you out when you are slacking off or falling off track. It can be way too easy to give up when the going gets tough.

By not telling anyone, you automatically give yourself an easy way out. If you quit, no one knows that you were even chasing after something. And more importantly, no one knows that you failed because of your lack of effort. You can just start over again with no real consequences. At least if you tell someone and you bail out, you'll have to deal with all of the questions about what happened? No one likes to look like a weasel.

Put some pressure on yourself to work toward your goals, because sometimes with cancer, you don't get a second chance.

**Even the greatest achievements in life started as a simple vow.**

## **6. Set STUPID Dreams**

*The attitude "That you can win if you want to badly enough" means that the will to win is constant and no amount of punishment, no amount of effort, or no condition is too "tough" to take in order to win. Such an attitude can be developed only if winning is closely tied to the practitioner's ideals and dreams.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Taking two steps in front of you in the next two minutes is a SMART goal, but it's not that challenging. Its certainly not motivating enough to "get your juices going".

You have to set SMART goals to accomplish the day-to-day tasks necessary for an effective treatment plan. But you also need something bigger to really inspire you to fight for your life when the going gets tough. What's really going to motivate you to get through treatment, beat cancer, and get back to your normal life? Completing a bunch of mundane goals? I doubt it. That's where dreams come in.

### **1. Think about your dreams to truly inspire you through the tough times.**

If there is anything positive about cancer, it's that it teaches you the true value of life. We don't realize how precious life is until something reminds us that it doesn't last forever. A lot of times we get so wrapped up in the realities and responsibilities of day-to-day living that we completely forget about what we really want to do in life. We just push off our dreams for a later day. Cancer teaches us that there might not be a later day, so you better start making your dreams come true right now.

Goals are about the necessary details of getting things done. Dreams are about the inspirational bigger picture. They provide us with hope and excitement for the future. If goals need to be SMART to be effective, dreams need to be STUPID to be inspiring. STUPID dreams are:

- S**cary
- T**ransformative
- U**nrealistic
- P**assion-based
- I**nspiring
- D**aring

### **2. Set dreams that scare you a little bit.**

Dreams need to make you a little uncomfortable in your seat. They need to have a WOW factor -- beat cancer, quit your job, travel the world, and write that book you've always wanted to. Holy cow, can I actually do it? What if it doesn't work out? What then?

Kids dream all of the time. Ask a kid what he or she wants to be when they grow up. I bet you don't get the traditional, common sense approach. They're dreamers. They want to be actors, rock stars, astronauts, and professional athletes, not sales reps, lawyers, service providers, and cubicle dwellers. Never mind that the odds are one-in-a-million.



Forget that if you don't make it you sacrifice a ton and may end up sleeping on your friend's couch. The biggest difference between kids and adults is that kids have no fear. Nothing is impossible. They don't think about failing or consequences or any such related negative thoughts.

It's simply kids' natural instinct to think that they can be or do anything. That's why they are so excited about life. Do you remember that feeling? Wasn't it a wonderful time? You need to recapture that feeling to get inspired. To set motivating, inspiring dreams, you have to return to that child-like mentality.

Forget about what the world says a responsible adult should do. Forget about what might happen if you set your heart on something and fail. What did you want to do when you were young and naïve and thought you could accomplish anything? What would you do today if you knew you couldn't fail? You'll know you set a worthwhile dream for yourself because when you return to the "real adult world", and think about actually pursuing that dream, it scares the crap out of you.

### **3. Set dreams that are transformative, or force a turning point in your life.**

While you can set those dreams in a child-like imagination state, you ultimately have to pursue those dreams in the real, adult world. Sorry, while at times I suggest you take a short trip to fantasyland to make your life better and more inspiring, you can't stay there forever. Ultimately, I want you to make your dreams come true in real life.

That means at some point you must go through a turning point. In the movie world, a turning point is a dramatic event that changes the main character's life forever. Chasing dreams will force you to go through the most dramatic turning point of all-time -- facing your fears.

What are most people afraid of? FAILING. Most people don't pursue their dreams in life because they are afraid of failing. Well what if this or that happens? They may have a life they envision in the back of their heads, but they'd rather play it safe, not take chances, and take the easy path to mediocrity.

That's the beauty of dreams. They don't let you sit back and settle for less than you deserve. They don't let fear paralyze you from taking action. They force you to get off your butt, take a chance, and truly live life.

Don't fear failure. Many great warriors, including the samurai, believed it is not failure, but low aim, that is the crime. They believed that in great attempts, it is glorious even to fail. I don't know about you, but I'd rather fail at greatness than succeed at mediocrity.

### **4. Set unrealistic dreams, or ones that are at least very difficult to achieve.**

Goals need to be realistic and achievable. Dreams can be unrealistic and unachievable. Let me rephrase that. A goal is something that if you put a reasonable amount of effort into, you know you'll achieve it. A dream is something that if you put your heart and soul into, you know there's still a chance that you might not achieve it.

That's sounds depressing but it's not – it falls under "the journey is more important than the destination" type of thinking. If a dream is really worth chasing, you'll be excited about just working towards that dream. My theory is that if you chase after your dreams, you'll automatically achieve all of your goals. If you shoot for the stars and fall short, you'll still have traveled farther than most people even dare.

If you know something is easy to achieve, the pursuit of that goal won't inspire you much. It won't motivate you to make tough, but positive changes in your life. If you know something is next to impossible to achieve, however, you're going to dig down deep and summon your energies, abilities, and actions to their peak potential. You'll truly be inspired, and the pursuit of that dream will bring out the best in you.

### **5. Your dreams must be tied to your passions.**

If there is a key to life, if there is a key to happiness, than I believe it is finding your passion.

1. What are you passionate about?
2. What gets you excited about waking up in the morning?
3. What makes your heart skip a beat when you think about it?
4. What would you do for a living if you were independently wealthy and money was not a factor?
5. What hobbies would you pursue if you knew you'd never receive a dime or an ounce of recognition for your participation in them?
6. What would you do if you didn't care what other people, society, or the world thought?
7. If your life was a Hollywood movie, and anything was possible, what would be the storyline?

Those are tough questions. Most of our important life decisions are influenced by our social responsibilities. Our passions get forgotten because we're buried working 80 hours a week to pay the bills, and living a realistic life. We give up on personal fulfillment because we have to, as the song says, "get a haircut and get a real job".

In 15 years working as a personal trainer, I've worked with a wide variety of clientele from a wide variety of professions. When you work with people one-on-one, day-in and day-out, for years, you become more than just a trainer. You become a friend. You also become a therapist.

You get to learn valuable lessons about life, because you get to see it through the eyes and perspectives of so many different people. You get to see what brings people up, what brings people down, and what really makes them tick.

I've trained pro and amateur athletes who were happy. Why? Their sport was their life. They lived to improve, and thrived on competition. Training was not an obligation or a grind. It was a privilege they looked forward to.

I've trained entrepreneurs and investors who were happy. Why? They were passionate about building companies, solving problems, or finding good business deals. The thrill of watching their hard work pay off (literally) was what they lived for.

I've trained doctors and nurses who were happy. Why? They were passionate about saving lives or getting patients healthy and pain-free.

I've trained teachers who were happy. Why? They were passionate about working with kids and making an impact on future generations.

I've trained an equal number of people in the same professions, some were even colleagues of the happy folks, who were extremely unhappy. They may have been extremely successful, but they weren't happy. What was the difference?

They weren't passionate about what they were doing. They were just picking up a paycheck. They were just going through the grind to make money, and putting off their passions and happiness until retirement. Those who were happy had found a way to incorporate their passions into their lives. Those who were not happy didn't. It was too consistent to be considered just a coincidence. Now that you know how important finding your passion is in obtaining happiness, it should be clear that your dreams must involve your passions.

When people are asked about what their dreams are many just give cliché answers. They're so used to suppressing their passions to function in the real world that they don't really know, or can't acknowledge, what their true dreams are. If deep down your passion is helping underprivileged kids and you'd like nothing more than to start a non-profit organization, then why would you say your dream is to win the lotto, buy a private island, and retire? Your dream doesn't align with your passions, and chances are you'd be bored and miserable on that island.

That's the beauty of dreams. We are all unique people from unique backgrounds, and we all have different passions.

## **6. Your dreams must be inspiring.**

So far you might be wondering how all of this dream talk pertains to you getting through cancer treatment. Isn't it more relevant to self-help seminars or life coaching courses? What does thinking about your dreams have to do with cancer? Setting goals of finishing treatment is not enough to motivate most people through the roughest times. Cancer treatment, disease symptoms, and side effects can be extreme, the worst of the worst. At that point, wanting to get rid of the cancer is not enough to keep going. "I'd rather just quit and die than go through another day of this."

That's because in the real world, most of us just lead boring, average lives. We've taken the safe and secure path, done what we're supposed to do, never really taken chances, never found what makes us happy, and have long forgotten about our dreams and passions. In essence, our spirit is already dead, even though we are going through the motions of life. Life doesn't seem like it is worth the hard fight because we don't have much to fight for. What, you want to go through hell so you can get back to your 9-to-5, paying the bills, and watching bad TV?

But what if you decided to make a change, instantly? What if you decided that if you beat this thing, you're going to face your fears, take some risks, find your passions, chase your dreams, and live the life you've always imagined? Isn't that worth fighting for? Isn't that worth living for?

That's why you need dreams. You need them to inspire you to fight to the bitter end and to never give up hope. Your dreams need to be so inspiring that there's no way in

hell you're going to let cancer beat you before you get a crack at chasing those dreams. It's not the life we lead that will motivate us to get through hell, it's the life that we want to lead. Find a passion to fight for, and you'll find that motivational tool you'll need to win.

### **7. Your dreams should be daring.**

Nothing in life worth acquiring comes without hard work, and more importantly, risks. All heroes, all legends, have taken risks along the way to experience greatness. That's why there are so few heroes. Most of us mere mortals hate taking risks. We'd rather watch other people do it, and read their success stories, than do it or experience it ourselves.

My question is this. If you've battled cancer, if you ultimately beat cancer, what could you possibly be afraid of in the future? You've stared death straight in the eyes and laughed in its face. What could possibly be worse -- making a fool of yourself, risking your career, losing some money, failing at something, trying something completely different?

Yeah right -- all of that pales in comparison to a brush with death. Risk doesn't seem so risky when you've had to make peace with mortality. If you've been given a second chance at life, than nothing should seem too risky. You're now on borrowed time anyways. Hey, we're all on borrowed time.

You have to set dreams that you really want to go after, no matter what the consequence -- not some half-assed realistic goal. Take a chance. Make it worth it.

### **You can never die in your dreams.**

## **7. Kaizen: Move One Step Closer To Your Goals Every Day**

*Daily progress. Make at least one definite move daily toward your goal...Always keep your goals in focus. Keep your mind on the things you want and off those you don't.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Kaizen is a Japanese word. The basic translation is: "constant and continual improvement." However, it's really more than just a word. Kaizen is a life philosophy — the idea being to somehow improve every day. How are you better — physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, etc. — than you were yesterday?

Although the origin of the Kaizen principle is Japanese, its implementation has nothing to do with being Japanese. Regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin, everyone can implement the Kaizen principle to his or her advantage.

The best athletes in the world consistently implement this principle. They are never satisfied with their current level of development. They're always trying to get just a little bit stronger, a little bit faster, a little bit more precise, a little bit more accurate, and a little bit more intelligent. They instinctively know that small improvements over time ultimately lead to big accomplishments. This constant desire to improve is what propels them to the top of their game.

### **1. Do at least one thing every day that moves you closer to your goals.**

Cancer warriors need to keep the Kaizen Principle in the forefront of their minds at all times. How have you improved today?

1. Did you learn a little more about your particular cancer to help you better prepare for your treatment?
2. Did you exercise or take a walk so your body remains physically strong?
3. Did you cut some junk food and make a better dietary choice to give your body the right fuel it needs to fight?
4. Did you read a motivational story that inspired you to keep pushing on?
5. Did you tell the people helping you through this tough time that you appreciate their sacrifice and support so they'll continue to be there for you?

Make one definitive move towards your goals daily. Constant improvement is Kaizen.

**The road to recovery starts with a single step and is finished by continually putting one foot in front of the other.**

## **8. Reduce Anxiety by Living in the Moment**

*The great mistake is to anticipate the outcome of the engagement; you ought not to be thinking of whether it ends in victory or in defeat. Just let Nature take its course, and your tools will strike at the right moment...Anxiety is the gap between the NOW and the THEN. So if you are in the NOW, you can't be anxious.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*Do not think of possible outcomes until you have finished with your battle. To do so is foolish and takes your mind off the primary objective, which is to destroy the enemy.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

We live in a modern world where the majority of people are anxious, over-worked, over-stimulated, over-stressed, and flat out miserable. A lot of the misery has to do with obsessively worrying about the future. A little bit of planning is good, my friend, but constant panicking is counterproductive.

1. Will I be able to finish all of my work tasks this week? This month
2. Will I hit my numbers and get a raise or promotion?
3. How will I do at that athletic competition?
4. Will I be able to acquire enough possessions so people think I'm successful?
5. How is that date going to go?
6. When will I find my soul mate?
7. Will I have enough money to retire?
8. Will I still look good 20 years from now?
9. Will my kids grow up to be happy and successful?
10. What if this or that happens? What if, what if, what if...

What if nothing happens, you end up fine, and all that worrying was for nothing? We can become so stressed about future outcomes that we forget to enjoy and appreciate the present moment. And usually the anticipation of suffering is much worse than any actual suffering or setbacks that take place in our life. The human body, mind, and spirit are pretty damn resilient.

**1. Don't worry too much about the desired outcome. Focus more on the steps you need to take to get to that outcome.**

You can see how anxiety and stressing about the future would be the natural, subconscious response for a cancer patient. You see how it could take over your life.

1. Will the treatment work?
2. How bad are the side effects going to be? How sick will I feel?
3. Is it going to spread?
4. How will my life be impacted?
5. Will things ever be normal again?

Give yourself a day to completely freak out, panic, and stress. Then, regroup. The truth is if you want to maintain some semblance of sanity, you just can't worry too much about all of the potential outcomes in the future. You can spend your whole life worrying about the worst situation that might not even happen, or you can just focus on what you need to do and what you still have in the present moment. Which one sounds more appealing?

Honestly, I think we're all just working towards the ultimate goal in life regardless of our situation — peace of mind. Peace of mind can only come in the present moment. Anxiety, doubt, fear, and worry all come from thinking about what is next. The future is unpredictable for all of us, regardless of our current situation.

**There is “The Power of Now,” but there is also peace in the now.**

## **9. Focus on the Task at Hand**

*Not to think, but to do. Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance,  
but to do what lies clearly at hand.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*Nothing fancy is involved. You go straight to the heart of the matter and defeat the enemy.  
There is nothing else involved. You either do it or you don't. There is only one purpose in  
attacking the enemy—to cut him down with finality.*

*~ Miyamoto Musashi*

Focusing on your current task builds upon the previous lesson. We can become so pre-occupied with the future and what might happen, that we lose sight of what we need to do in the present.

“What if the treatment doesn’t work?” Worry about that only if it becomes the case. For now, do what you need to do. Give treatment an honest chance to work. The future and all it has to bring — good or bad — is going to come regardless of whether or not we worry about it.

In modern society, distraction is all around us. It’s the norm. We try to multi-task and do 50 different things at once. We’re all scatter-brained and spread way too thin to get anything of real value done. It’s easy to get lost in the hustle and bustle of this modern shuffle.

What ends up happening because of it is we do a bunch of things with mediocrity, yet achieve greatness in nothing. Or we burn out and look for an escape, a distraction from the chaos that has become our life. We drink too much, turn to drugs, or find other destructive outlets. This simply won’t do with your fight against cancer. You must narrow your focus, concentrate, and put all of your effort into the task at hand.

**You can achieve anything in life if you tackle it one task at a time.**



## **10. The Wave Man: Roll With What Comes**

*Life is an ever-flowing process and somewhere on the path some unpleasant things will pop up – it might leave a scar, but then life is flowing, and like running water, when it stops it grows stale. Go bravely on, my friend, because each experience teaches us a lesson. Keep blasting because life is such that sometimes it is nice and sometimes it is not.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*You have a tendency to waste a lot of your energy in worry and anticipation. Remember my friend to enjoy your planning as well as your accomplishment, for life is too short for negative energy...So remember that one who is possessed by worry not only lacks the poise to solve his own problems, but by his nervousness and irritability creates additional problems for those around him.*

*~Bruce Lee*

You have every right to be scared, angry, and resentful. You have every right to feel sorry for yourself and to curse the world. But at some point, you will have to just drop it all and roll with the hand you've been given. Life is random. So be it. One thing is certain: you can't change the reality of the situation you face no matter how much you wish things were different. But you *can* change your reactions to your situation and change your everyday state of mind to better deal with it.

### **1. Be like water. Be flexible and adapt.**

Sometimes you just have to take whatever life thrusts on you with a smile and deal with life's challenges with a "glass half-full" approach. I grew up in a small beach town — Half Moon Bay, CA. We're most known for Mavericks, the big wave surfing spot. Although I never surfed, I certainly adopted the "roll with whatever comes, don't take life too seriously, be flexible like water, and enjoy the ride on the waves of life even when it gets rocky" Wave Man mentality.

I don't know for sure, but I think it's a good way to live. Part of that may just be my natural predisposition. But I think the other part is some of the lessons I've learned while studying different philosophies and cultures.

And it's not just because life has been a bed of roses for me. I've been in some pretty crappy situations and gone through some tough challenges, disappointments, and struggles like everyone else. But if you can stay calm and adapt, you can make it out to the other side. If you stay rigid and crack, you may get buried beneath it all.

I'm not telling you to accept anything without fighting back. I'm not telling you to give up. I'm telling you to bend with the stress so you don't break under it. I'm telling you to roll with the ups and downs, the challenges as well as the rewards. It's an easier, more peaceful way to live.

### **2. Share a laugh with those around you.**

With the weight of the world on you, sometimes if you just take a moment to shrug your shoulders and laugh, it all slides right off. Your problems will still be waiting

for you after you've given yourself that emotional break. If you are going to cry, to be worried, and to be angry, then you also deserve to laugh, right? If you are alive and fighting, nothing is as bad as it could be.

I believe that taking yourself and your situation a little more lightly at times will actually put you in a better emotional state to fight with unwavering discipline and seriousness at others. Or...

**Laugh now to fight your best later.**

## **11. Embrace Death to Appreciate Life in Every Breath**

*The gods envy us. They envy us because we're mortal, because any moment might be our last. Everything is more beautiful because we are doomed. You will never be lovelier than you are now. We will never be here again.*

~Achilles, *Troy*

*But then I come to this place of my ancestors, and I remember. Like these blossoms, we are all dying. To know life in every breath, every cup of tea, every life we take. The way of the warrior... That is Bushido.*

~Katsumoto, *The Last Samurai*

Here's the tough love truth: all of us are in the same situation. All of us are dying from the moment we are born. Either of us can walk outside today, get hit by a truck, and then it is "game over." We all have an expiration date. And we should all be living with that understanding. You could curse your lot, but the reality is that all of us are on borrowed time. The end for kings and queens, heroes and heroines, you and me, are all exactly the same.

Maybe you should consider yourself the lucky one — that you have this wake-up call to truly appreciate your life. A lot of us say we do, but few of us have a true understanding of what that statement really means. Most of us live our lives like we are going to live forever. We procrastinate, we take for granted, we let petty differences ruin relationships, and we put off our dreams for some time down the line (which usually means never). All of the little things in life that we stress about distract us from the big things that truly matter, and that we would focus on if we knew we had a finite period of time.

We wake up old men or women full of regret, realizing we never lived up to our potential, rarely did the things we set out to do, got caught up in the grind, and left our dreams behind. In short, we settled. And it's all because we thought we were going to live forever. You have a chance now that many don't get, because you have a glaring reminder of just how precious and finite life is.

When you stare death in the face on a daily basis, all of those little distractions that fill up our life and are really meaningless disappear. That lets you focus on the big things that truly matter.

Make amends, hug someone you love, tell people what you feel, chase after a passion, live out a dream, and be who you really want to be. I wonder what great things many of us could have accomplished if we meditated on death every day and embraced mortality from the beginning. Maybe you will be one of the lucky few who can change that "I should have" into a "yep, I did that!"

**Every moment matters, whether you have one or a million left.**

## **12. Harness the Power of Habit**

*I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Human beings are creatures of habit. We become fixed in our daily rituals and patterns, and once they're established, they're hard to break. Once we become set in our ways, it can almost seem "life-altering" to try to change them. This can happen in all areas of our lives — work, social, family, finances, health and fitness — and most importantly for your purposes, the battle against cancer. It would be wise to make good use of the habits you form in your life.

### **1. Use the greatest amount of effort and leverage you have to power through your transition phase.**

The hardest part about making changes in your life is getting started. This applies to your fight against cancer, but in reality, it applies to anything you are struggling with in your life. Getting into the game and making that "U-turn" can seem difficult, almost impossible, at first. You have new treatments, a new diet you have to follow, a new daily schedule, a bunch of new healthcare obligations, etc. Large amounts of force and leverage are necessary to change direction and travel down your new path. This is where most people become stuck and give up.

I'm not going to lie. There will be no infomercial promises here. It is super hard in the beginning. It takes effort. But once you work hard and get over the hump, it gets easier. Change is difficult in the beginning, but it's not hard forever. The steps you need to take seem impossible because you're currently traveling in the opposite direction. Once you put in some effort and start making some positive changes, those ideas won't seem so unrealistic or far-fetched. Here's how you power through the transition phase:

1. *Dive in head-first:* Don't sit back and overanalyze or lament about how difficult making the needed change is going to be — that's a waste of your energy. Instead, just put one foot in front of the other and start the process.

2. *Start strong, then coast:* Once you do start, just understand and make peace with the fact that the process IS going to be difficult in the beginning. And remind yourself that it will get easier.

To make changes in your daily habits, the greatest amount of focus, dedication, and effort is applied in the beginning. Once you get the ball rolling, it will be easier to keep it rolling. Treatment, lifestyle changes, supporting care, etc. — it makes no difference. Just get started.

### **2. Ride the Wave of Momentum.**

*Inertia: in-er-tia. Noun. The resistance of an object to a change in its state of motion; tendency of an object in motion to remain in motion, or an object at rest to remain at rest, unless acted upon by a force.*

I could argue that inertia is the most powerful force that acts upon our daily lives. Surely you've felt its impact, both positive and negative, at some point in your life. You know the time where you just couldn't get started on something or make a change in your life no matter how bad you wanted to or how hard you tried. Or the time where it felt like things were rolling, everything was clicking, and you were blasting through all of your goals. Both of those demonstrate the power of inertia, and you can accomplish a lot (or a little) in your life based on how you use it.

To form positive habits you must harness this power of momentum, and then, use it. Once you buckle down and start making positive changes and implementing them on a consistent basis, the process gets infinitely easier. You will feel more motivated, energetic, and confident. You won't have to work as hard to make the right choice. It will come naturally. Change is an upward spiral that becomes easy when backed by good momentum.

All of those weekly tasks you need to complete in order to take care of yourself and beat cancer will first be a nuisance, but with momentum, they become second nature. It's like surfing -- paddle hard and fight to gain your balance and stand up. Once you do, ride the wave of momentum to keep propelling you forward.

### **3. Turn good momentum into permanent habit.**

Making things automatic separates those who achieve so-so results for a short period of time from those who achieve outstanding results permanently. When we leave important decisions up to choice, we often stay within our comfort zone and take the easy way out. We take the most convenient path, whether or not it is the right path. We get lazy, and promise ourselves that we will improve tomorrow, next month, next year, or some other future time. But putting in some work, riding the wave of momentum, and forming positive habits automatically forces you to improve. It doesn't leave it up to choice, or how you feel at that moment.

Most people constantly struggle with choices in every area of their lives. When habits aren't automatic, you leave things up to impulse. That's a hard enemy to overcome. How many of us make the best choice? And how often do we make that choice? For those just trying to wing it, life can become a constant struggle. Temptation and laziness are always in your face. It becomes easy to give up. You feel like you always need to have superhuman willpower. You feel like you constantly have to give things up, deprive yourself, and sacrifice. Everyone else gets to do whatever he or she wants, but you are stuck suffering through the more beneficial, but challenging choice. You begin to resent the process of recovery or self-improvement, and eventually you quit.

For the most successful people I know in a wide variety of areas, it's not a constant struggle because the negative choices aren't even a consideration or an option. They've made the positive path so automatic that they don't even have to think about it. They don't want to struggle with choices every day. They don't want to fight battles against impulse, laziness, or any other formidable foe. They want the process to be easy. The only

way to truly make it easy is to make as many of the steps necessary to achieve whatever you want as automatic as possible.

How will you use your habits in your cancer battle? Will they be enemies that you must constantly fight against or allies that give you the best chance of succeeding?

**If there is a Way to victory, it is surely found in our habits.**

### **13. Use Faith to Overcome Fear**

*All men are the same except for their belief in their own selves, regardless of what others may think of them.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

*The power of faith – thoughts backed by faith will overcome all obstacles... Faith makes it possible to achieve that which man's mind can conceive and believe. It is a well known fact that one comes, finally, to believe whatever one repeats to one's self, whether the statement be true or false... Every man is what he is because of the dominating thoughts which he permits to occupy his mind.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Fear is the one human emotion that holds us back more than anything else in our lives. Fear paralyzes us and prevents us from taking meaningful action. It shatters our self-confidence and spirit of adventure. It prevents us from doing the things we know we need to do, trying everything we want to try, and from becoming who we really want to become.

Most of us don't pursue our dreams and aspirations in life because we are afraid of failing. "Well what if this or that happens? What then?" We may have a life we envision for ourselves in the back of our heads, but we'd rather play it safe, not take chances, and take the easy path to mediocrity. We bury our dreams and passions and settle for the grind of everyday life.

For many of us, this fear is subconscious. We don't understand that fear is holding us back from making changes. We think it's because of a multitude of other reasons: we don't have enough time, work is too busy, there are too many other responsibilities at home, we don't have any support, we're too stressed, we haven't found the magic pill or the right guru yet, etc. But if we're honest, it all boils down to the fact that we're just scared to make some tough changes and get started on our path to accomplishing the goals we've set.

#### **1. To beat cancer, you have to face your fears.**

For most of us, the fear of failing is far more powerful than the chance at succeeding. This simply won't do with your battle against cancer. If fear is holding you back from achieving your goals, and most fears are subconscious, then we need to identify what your fears are and give you some psychological tools and new ways of thinking to get past your fears. This is the only way you are going to win. Until you admit your fears and face them head on, you're destined for failure.

#### **2. Don't fear failure.**

This is the most obvious fear. We are afraid of failing. We are afraid of setting goals, committing to them, working hard, and still not getting the results we want. We are afraid that even if we make sacrifices and put in our best efforts, we might not reach our goals. We have doubt. We have reservations. We don't believe in ourselves 100% or have

the self-confidence to trust that we can achieve what others have achieved. We believe our enemy is more powerful than us. All of those thoughts are self-limiting...and they're also not true.

### **3. What's the worst that can happen if you fail? The same thing that is going to happen if you don't even make an attempt.**

Whenever the fear of failure is preventing you from taking action, just ask yourself two simple questions. **The first question:** "What's the worst that could possibly happen if I fail?"

In most cases in life, the absolute worst possible outcome isn't so bad. Maybe you'll look a little stupid, embarrass yourself, take a shot to the ego, lose some money, lose a little time and effort, have to put up with some comments or criticisms from your family and friends, or just have to go back to what you were doing before. None of that is really all that bad, is it?

The fear of failing is usually much worse than what happens when you actually fail. Trust me; I've failed at many things in my life. I've failed far more than I've succeeded, but my life never ended. I've always managed to pick myself up, dust myself off, and try again. When the successes finally come, the past failures make them that much sweeter.

In the case of cancer, obviously the stakes and consequences are a lot higher. But the reality is that you automatically seal your fate if you don't try. So it can't get any worse than that right? Any advances you make are steps away from the worst-case scenario. You try to beat the disease, and if you don't succeed, you're just back to where you started if you hadn't tried.

In other words, you have nothing to lose by picking up a sword and fighting back. The enemy is going to attack regardless. At least you'll know you fought with honor and gave it your best shot if you find the courage to fight.

### **4. Remind yourself that your life can change if you succeed.**

**The second question:** "What's the best that could possibly happen if I succeed?"

Your answer(s) to that question is what will kick start your heart and motivate you to get moving. It could change your life forever. You could do something great for yourself. You could beat this disease and help motivate other people along the way. You could become a role model, a real life hero.

You know how they tell you to balance risk and reward when making life's decisions? In most cases the reward far outweighs the risk. Nothing could be truer in the cancer battle.

### **5. When in doubt, simply learn to believe in your abilities and potential.**

Most of us, including you, are capable of a great deal more than what we believe. Have faith in yourself, faith in your doctors, faith in your treatment plan, or spiritual faith.



Whatever helps you overcome fear and stay the course is a valuable asset. The only thing that separates heroes, heroines, and legends from everyone else in life is their belief in their own self and causes.

**If someone else has done it, you can do it too. They are just a man or a woman, same as you.**

## **14. Take Action to Stop Paralysis by Analysis**

*Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*When you understand what I am telling you, apply what you have learned to your everyday life...I am not interested with your talk about my ideas. I am more interested in your applying them to your life.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Paralysis by analysis is often the end result of fear. Should I go in this direction or that direction? Should I do this or do that? If I go down the left path will I miss the opportunities on the right? What if “x” happens? What will I do if my chosen plan doesn’t work as expected? What then?

You start second, third, and hundredth-guessing yourself. You end up so worried about the potential outcomes, or making the wrong choices, that instead of progressing through change you become frozen with fear. I can guarantee you one thing: Doing nothing is the worst option of all.

### **1. Emphasize action above everything else.**

Faith in your abilities is a good way to overcome fear. But faith is still just a concept — a theory or belief in the mind. Faith alone doesn’t accomplish anything. Faith is just the starting point. *Action* is what finalizes the positive potential that faith creates.

In addition, faith that is strong enough to be useful in the real world can take time to build up. You simply may not have the luxury of time. Action is immediate. In addition, sometimes just taking action can go a long way in helping you build up your faith.

### **2. A simple recipe for success: Mix 3-parts action for every 1-part theory, thought, or talk.**

It would be easy for me to present this book and say, "There, now you have all of the strategies you need to fight your battle," and be done with it. Unfortunately, that wouldn’t be enough for you to achieve real world results. The right strategies do not guarantee action. Action, specifically your action, is the only way you’ll see real results.

I must emphasize the tough love truth that we all need a reminder of from time-to-time. As is the case with anything in life, including your battle with cancer, it is not what you read, think, analyze, plan, calculate, or talk about in this world that brings results. It is all about what you DO.

Many people read books, blogs, or articles to pass the time or for "entertainment value." They have no real intent of ever making changes. If that is the case, let me save you a lot of time and wasted effort right now. This book is not for you. This book is not for entertainment purposes. The stakes are just too high to waste your time. This book is only for those who want to put forth an honest effort in battle. You don’t have to apply

everything all at once tomorrow, but you should proceed with the intent of making some changes.

**3. Do something, anything, immediately. Get started with your battle NOW.**

Sometimes just putting the wheels in motion takes you further along your journey, and at a faster pace, than having the perfect route planned out from beginning to end. Sometimes you'll get to a road on your map that is unexpectedly closed. You'll have to find an alternative route. Nothing ever goes as smoothly as expected in life.

Sometimes when you just start on a journey, the path that you'll ultimately end up taking begins to unveil itself. New doors, new opportunities, and new plans of action you never even thought of will present themselves. None of this can happen if your car stays in the garage.

**No situation ever improves by sitting on the sidelines of life and doing nothing.**

## **15. Take on the Warrior Profession**

*The only reason a warrior is alive is to fight, and the only reason a warrior fights is to win. Otherwise, why be a warrior? It is easier to count beads.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

The movie, *300*, is about a legendary battle where 300 Spartan warriors stand against the entire invading Persian army of over a million. There is a scene in *300* where the Spartans meet up with an ally Greek army to prepare for their stand. The leader of the Greek army comments on the lack of soldiers the Spartans have brought to fight in this epic battle. The head of the Spartan army, Leonidas, responds by asking the Greek army, formed from regular citizens, what their true professions are.

*Leonidas: "You there, what's your profession?"*

One by one they respond with varying answers — farmer, merchant, potter. Leonidas then turns to his 300 Spartan soldiers and says:

*Leonidas: "Spartans, what is your profession?"*

They raise their weapons in the air and reply in unison with a loud battle cry. The implication is that their only profession is as soldiers. Leonidas turns back to the leader of the Greek army and says:

*Leonidas: "You see. I brought more soldiers to this battle than you did."*

### **1. Your new profession is cancer warrior. Fulfill your duty.**

The lesson from *300* that every cancer warrior needs to apply is simple and straightforward. For the next seven weeks, seven months, seven years, or however long your treatment protocol lasts, you are not a lawyer, an accountant, a sales rep, a retiree, or whatever your current trade may be. Your true profession during this time is a cancer warrior.

Although you may do something else to pay the bills, you must dedicate your life to the specific task at hand. If you want to win against insurmountable odds, this is the type of intense focus it will take.

**From the moment his eyes open to the moment they shut, and even in his dreams, a warrior never forgets his true purpose.**

## **16. Find Balance Off the Battlefield**

*In the yin-yang symbol there is a white spot on the black part and a black part on the white one. This is to illustrate the balance in life, for nothing can survive long going to either extreme.  
~Bruce Lee*

Even the greatest warriors took time away from the battlefield. All sports have an off-season for a reason. The body AND mind need some rest after an intense battle, game, training or treatment session. Time away from the fight is good for licking our wounds, re-grouping, re-charging, re-focusing, and remembering what we are fighting for. If you over-do anything in life — even things that you enjoy — eventually it becomes a chore, a bore, or just a flat-out grind.

### **1. Find some balance with a positive distraction.**

Pick up a hobby, learn a new skill, spend more time with family and close friends, or focus on something that you are truly passionate about. We all can use a break from the battlefield of life from time-to-time. We all need an escape where we can take our mind off our problems, relax, and unwind. Your opponents will be there when you return. Give yourself an hour or two a day, or whatever time you can spare, to break free. Simply live for the pure enjoyment of the present moment.

For my dad, it was fishing. For a friend, it was martial arts. For another, it was writing. For yet another, it was reading good books. As you can see, the options are endless. Try to make it something where you mentally or physically engage. This way you must focus, and your mind can't drift off and drown in your sea of problems. Lose yourself in the process. You may just discover that it will help you find a new reason to fight.

### **Balance prevents burn out.**

## **17. Find Your Sidekick**

*You see you got 3-4 good pals, well then you got yourself a tribe. There ain't nothing stronger than that.*

*~Billy the Kid, Young Guns*

On the battlefield, the warrior cannot show emotion. He cannot show fear, doubt, or remorse. His enemy will exploit any and all vulnerabilities. The warrior can only fulfill his duty, and complete the given task.

Off the battlefield, however, warriors and heroes always have a sidekick. Watch any movie. Read any book. Most importantly, listen to any real-life success story. The hero always has a personal confidante. He or she always has a wife, a husband, a brother, a sister, a friend, a mentor, a teammate, or a colleague who he confides in. With this special person, the hero can show his true self, his true emotions. He can express his fears, his doubts, his anger, and his desires. He or she can shed the tears that the rest of the world will never see.

### **1. Show cancer no emotion except ruthless aggression.**

When you face cancer, you cannot show any fear against your enemy. You must face it head on with no hesitation. You cannot show any vulnerability or weakness. Your battle must be fierce, your heart must be cold, and your actions must be swift.

### **2. Share all other emotions — good and bad — with your sidekick.**

Off the battlefield, at home, you need to find your sidekick. Find the person you can cry in front of. Find the person you can express all of your fears to. Find the person you know you can lean on when you are at your weakest. Find that person who will never judge you. Every once in a while, even heroes need to hear that everything is going to be OK.

It's not as easy as you think it should be. Many people are good talkers, but few are good listeners. Not everyone is as compassionate as they think they are. So, be selective when you choose your sidekick for your battle. You don't want to turn around in a shootout with the enemy to see your crew has run for the hills.

My wife gets to see a side of me that no one else in this world does — not my brothers, not my friends, not anyone. To the outside world, I am a cool, confident, collected cat. I have all of my stuff together. I can seamlessly roll with whatever life throws at me, Wave Man-style. I can take on anyone and anything with a smile. All of that is true for the most part, but it's only because of the special support I get at home.

Behind closed doors, I've broken down in front of my sidekick more times than I can count. I've told her how scared I was, how helpless I've felt, how weak I really am, and how there was no way I thought I could win against the challenges I faced.

She's seen the true me, just a scared little kid trying to grow up in an unforgiving world. Each time, she's been there to listen to me, clean off my wounds, pick me up, and throw me back onto the battlefield that is life. Even if I were ready to accept defeat, she

would not let me. Without my sidekick, my kingdom would have fallen. My journey would have ended long ago. The lesson?

**Find that one special person who will ride by your side until the end.**

## **18. Fight Your Way**

*In order to control myself I must first accept myself by going with and not against my nature. Everybody has to think for himself. A right way for a big man may not be a right way for a small man. A right way for someone who is slow may not be a right way for someone who is quick. Each person must understand his weaknesses and his strengths.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*There is no one way to attack and destroy the enemy. Use combinations, single attacks, multiple attacks, etc., with all the tools of your craft such as punching, kicking, and striking. Destroy the enemy by any and all means.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

I am a big fan of mixed martial arts (MMA). You don't have to be to understand the underlying concept behind it. The MMA athlete can't just rely on archaic traditions or the limitations of a specific fighting style. They use strategies and techniques from all fighting styles – kickboxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu, etc. -- to be prepared for whatever happens in battle. Results mean more than clinging to systems during a real-life fight inside a cage. MMA athletes use whatever strengths they have, attack their opponent's weaknesses, and win the fight by any means necessary.

As a cancer warrior, you are in an even more intense fight with infinitely higher stakes. You are in a fight for your life. Dogma and archaic traditions are fine for when you are just talking about life in theory. But when it comes to a real-life battle against cancer, the only option is to find what works in practice.

### **1. Find what works for you, whether that is the traditional or not-so-traditional route.**

There is nothing that must be done. There is only what works, and even more importantly, what works specifically for YOU. Don't misunderstand me. You should definitely have an overall road map laid out by your healthcare professionals. But maybe you take a few different turns, detours, and back roads — based on the specific strengths or limitations of the vehicle you have — to reach your final destination.

Maybe you'll hear that individual therapy sessions would be good for you, but you know in your heart that you get much more out of sharing stories in groups or simply through self-help strategies or reading motivational books. Maybe you'll hear that you need to meditate for stress relief, but you do far better with something a little more active like walking, yoga, hitting a punching bag, etc.

Your battle is too important to fit into a dogmatic system. What good is saying you followed the traditional route if you lose the overall war? Do you want to be a statistic or a success story?

Sometimes what looks good in studies, in textbooks, on the chalkboard, or in a written report doesn't always work in real life. And it doesn't account for you, the individual, and your preferences, tendencies, and individual response.

**Find YOUR way to get the desired results. Find YOUR way to win.**



## **19. Embrace the Challenge: Don't Complain About the Circumstances**

*What IS is more important than WHAT SHOULD BE. Too many people are looking at "what is" from a position of thinking "what should be"...And no matter what some people will say, barriers are not the experience of any one person, or any one group of persons. They are the universal experience.*

*~Bruce Lee*

The warrior's primary purpose in life is to fight their enemies, to do battle. The Samurai, the Trojans, the Spartans — they were all trained from a young age for the sole purpose of fighting for their home, their family, and their way of life. They did not question the reason for their existence. They had not chosen their fate. Fate had chosen them. It simply was their destiny to become fierce, elite warriors. They did not run from it. They trained day-in and day-out to fulfill their duty.

### **1. First, you may question your starting situation.**

As a person with cancer, you'll go through a series of psychological responses to your diagnosis. Inevitably, you'll reach the questions that pertain to your circumstance. "Why me? Why now? Why not someone else?"

It's easy to question your circumstances and situation in life, especially when it's not going your way. That's a natural reaction and is certainly understandable. For the most part, however, it's wasted energy.

### **2. Then, you must change your final fate.**

We can't change the situations and challenges that life has put in front of us. We can feel sorry for ourselves. We can wish our situation were different. But we can't change it. When the rain of tears stops and the fog of resentment clears, all you can do is face the day and march bravely on.

The cancer warrior's purpose in life, for the present time, is to battle their enemy, to battle cancer. Whether it is God's plan, an act of the gods, fate, pure coincidence, bad luck, or whatever else you believe in, the cause is of no real significance.

All that matters is the reality of the situation and the actions you take to deal with it head-on. As a cancer warrior, you have no choice but to fulfill your destiny and battle cancer to the best of your ability.

Stop cursing your circumstances. Start changing them. One day, others will use your story as inspiration to fight their own battle. There is no fate but what we make. You know how the story starts, and it can't be changed. But you can go out and write yourself a better ending.

**Every second that you waste complaining about something is one that you could have used to make a change.**

## **20. Simplify: Hack Away Unessential**

*Gung fu values the wonder of the ordinary, and the idea is not daily increase but daily decrease. Being wise in gung fu does not mean adding more but being able to remove sophistication and ornamentation and be simply simple – like a sculptor building a statue not by adding, but by hacking away the unessential so that the truth will be revealed unobstructed... The utmost is expressed and performed in the minimum movements and energy.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Our lives are overcomplicated. We have too much useless stuff, we have too many meaningless obligations, and we waste too much time and energy on all of it. It's time to hack away at the unessential in all areas of your life so you can:

- A) Have enough time for what is really important in life.
- B) Have enough energy to be at full strength for your battle.

### **1. Save your strength. Be selective with your time. Conserve your energy.**

Give up the superfluous things in life that are draining your energy and slowing or challenging your recovery. What's best in life, besides "crushing your enemy (cancer)"? Your passions and the people you love. That's it. Eliminate everything else that is unrelated. You can't stretch yourself too thin and wear yourself out. You need your strength.

Work obligations? Gone. They'll be there when you get back. Travel hassle? Forget about it. The world is not going anywhere. Minimize the excess so you can maximize your efforts towards your fight. Be selective with your time. You have no grains of sand to waste.

### **2. Make a list of your top priorities, and focus only on that list.**

Make a list of your top 3 passions in life. Make sure most of your day focuses on them. Make a list of the 3 most important people in your life. Guard against anything or anyone that tries to take you away from them. Learn to say no — to obligations, time-suckers, energy-drainers, and meaningless tasks. Spend time with the people you love and do what you enjoy and are passionate about. Everything else gets your voicemail.

Remember, you have a new appreciation for life. You can't just mindlessly walk around like a zombie doing "whatever" or allow others to "force" you to choose their priorities. You have to live with your own passion and purpose and narrow priorities down to just the most important things — your actual priorities. But the weeding doesn't end there.

**Hack away the unessential in everything. There are no sands of time or molecules of energy to waste.**

## **21. Conquer One to Conquer All**

*To know ten thousand things, know one well.  
~Miyamoto Musashi*

There is something in life that you are good at. Maybe you're an exceptional athlete. Maybe you're a great businessperson. Maybe you excel at your job. Maybe you're a good parent, sibling, spouse, or friend. This is no time for self-loathing, pity, or false humility. You ARE good at something. Or at the very least, you were good at something in the past.

As a result, you've probably already applied most of the principles in this book in one specific area of your life. You just might have done it subconsciously. Because when we are participating in something we're passionate about, we do most of the things we need to do, and exhibit many of the characteristics we need to be successful, AUTOMATICALLY.

**1. Write down the habits or strategies that you feel helped you succeed in something you are (or were) good at.**

I'm guessing the list is going to look a lot like the principles we've been talking about in this book already. To be good at something, you need to set goals, sacrifice, know your potential obstacles, persevere through struggles, form good habits, eliminate distractions, continually learn and improve, etc.

**2. Once you have that list, start applying those habits and strategies to your fight against cancer.**

The good thing is that you will have a list that will specifically help YOU. It's not my Way, or anyone else's Way. You'll have strategies that are specific to you, that have helped you in the past, that motivate your unique personality, and take advantage of your specific skills.

**If you can be good at one thing, you can be good at anything.**

## 22. Strengthen Your Steel Spirit

*You first beat the enemy with your spirit and then you beat the enemy with your hands or your sword... Never be overwhelmed by the enemy. You can ensure this by keeping your spirit tall and your resolve strong. Regardless of how the enemy approaches, your main thought should be to cut him down.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

If you missed it through all of the battle scenes and sword fighting, one of the morals of the *Conan the Barbarian* story is the enduring strength of the human spirit. On a side note, you don't have to be a meathead or have watched the movie to learn a valuable lesson from a meathead's movie.

The central themes of the movie are two-fold: revenge and solving the "Riddle of Steel." What Conan eventually learns, ironically through his nemesis, is that the human spirit is infinitely stronger than any man-made weapon.

*Thulsa Doom: There was a time, boy, when I searched for steel, when steel meant more to me than gold or jewels.*

*Conan: The riddle of steel.*

*Thulsa Doom: Yes! You know what it is, don't you boy? Shall I tell you? It's the least I can do. Steel isn't strong, boy. Flesh is stronger...what is steel compared to the hand that wields it?*

*~Conan the Barbarian*

As Conan slashes his way to revenge, we learn two universal truths via his journey:

1. A man is in complete control of the weapons he commands.
2. A man's spirit is far more powerful than any weapons he stands against.

That's why two individuals were able to stand against many in the final battle scene. Conan only needed his sword, some personal accountability for making his own destiny, and the power of the human spirit. With that realization, he fearlessly jumps into battle and conquers his enemies with a warrior's fury, despite the seemingly insurmountable odds. You can apply that lesson to all things, including your fight with cancer. It's also just as true for women as it is for men.

Thulsa Doom left Conan for dead on the "Tree of Woe," but having been taught the lesson of the "Steel Spirit," Conan ultimately survives, recovers, and battles his way back to gain his revenge and kill his enemy. You face an even greater foe than Conan. But if you dig deep, nourish your courage, and truly understand the riddle of steel, you will get your revenge!

**No enemy stands a chance against the power of the human spirit.**

## **23. Be Authentic: Honestly Express Yourself**

*Many people dedicate their lives to actualizing a concept of what they should be like, rather than actualizing themselves. This difference between self-actualizing and self-image actualizing is very important. Most people only live for their image... Where some people have a self, most people have a void, because they are so busy projecting themselves as this or that. This is again the curse of the ideal. The curse is that you should not be what you are.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*Do not bear false attitudes. False attitudes work best where there are no enemies. In real situations they can get you killed very quickly... Think about being seen only by yourself and not through the eyes of others. Why would you want to appear as one thing and be another?*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Projecting an image, putting on a show for the world, being the cool guy or girl, or acting like everything is alright when you are crumbling inside are all a big waste of time and energy. You have neither to spare. This is the greatest fight of your life. There is no doubt that you'll experience the full spectrum of human emotion. You need to be able to express each and every one of those emotions openly and freely. Don't bottle them up inside to play a role, or for fear of judgment. Eventually, you'll crack. You won't be getting the true, meaningful support you need.

### **1. Only spend time with the people you're comfortable being your true self around.**

There are people in your life who love you no matter what. They don't need you to put on a show. They are not judging you. They are not there to be entertained. They only want to support you in your journey any way that they can — whether that means donating a shoulder to cry on, an ear for a rant, a face to punch to let out your anger, or a smile to share when you say screw it all. They are happy just being the hero's sidekick in any way he or she deems necessary. Trust me, I've been one. And every opportunity to support was a privilege, not a burden.

These are the types of people you need to surround yourself with. Tell the rest of the people that you feel you need to put on an act for that the theater is closed.

### **2. Honestly express whatever you are feeling.**

When you're an open book, you eliminate the stress of trying to hide things or of trying to decide what you should say and what you should keep secret. It takes far too much energy to keep skeletons in the closet. Honest expression leads to real connection.

Are you scared? So be it. Let it out. The sooner you do, the sooner you and your support group can deal with it. They can help you face your fears head on.

Do you feel like crying? One man's tears are just a dirty puddle. But put a few together, and you have a beautiful rainstorm that can wash away the pain.

Do you feel anger and resentment? Holding it in keeps the fog trapped in the Bay. Let it out like a strong gust of wind and, eventually, the sun will shine through.

Want to forget about your problems for a while and just laugh them all away? Share some good stories. Those laughs will create thunder that shakes cancer to its knees. What enemy can defeat a man that laughs in the face of death?

Just because you have to fight like a superhero doesn't mean you actually are one. You're a real human being with a full spectrum of emotions, infinitely magnified given the situation. Share them. Express them. Don't bottle them up. If you do, they will rot in your heart and eventually become toxic — not just to yourself, but to everyone else around you.

**Be who you are, express what you feel, and say what you mean.  
Anything else is useless.**

## **24. Avoid Stalemates With Back-up Plans**

*Flexibility is a very important attitude. Things will not always go your way regardless of your practice and your attempts to define your own existence... You attack with a technique and it does not work. You try it again and it still does not work. Switch! You must never rely on only one particular attitude to get a job done. The enemy may be prepared for this technique in a way that you may not have anticipated, so it is indeed foolish to try to continue with it.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Despite all of the literature and scientific research, how much do you think we really understand about cancer in specific, and the human body in general -- maybe 25%? I'd say that's being very generous.

That estimate is coming from someone who has a science background and studies the human body and its complex processes on a daily basis — both for professional duty and for personal passion. Trust me, that body you have is a mystical organism, the culmination of millions of years of evolution. Individual genetics, lifestyle factors, and environmental impact further complicate the situation. They make guaranteed, predictable outcomes a mere fantasy – nice to believe in, but rarely the reality.

As such, you have to be willing to just flow with the rhythm of the game and adapt to your individual response and feedback. If something works, great. If it doesn't work, remain courageous. Be flexible enough to adjust your course and try something new and different based on your unique situation. You're in this battle for the long haul and to find whatever ultimately helps you win.

You and I can learn from championship sports teams, the ones that exhibit consistent excellence and success.

### **1. Start with a strong game plan.**

Come out swinging with a strong game plan. You've put your treatment strategy together with your medical team. Your initial action plan is based on research, knowledge of the disease, past cases, and years of experience. It takes the existing information and gives you the best shot at winning. Follow this plan to the best of your abilities.

### **2. Be flexible enough to make adjustments as necessary.**

The most consistently successful teams are the ones that can make smart adjustments based on the flow of the game. They come out with an informed game plan. But sometimes the way the ball is bouncing that day, it's just not working. Maybe one of their best players is injured, there is an unexpected change in the weather, or they completely underestimated the skills of their opponent.

During halftime, they adjust the original plan based on what is actually unfolding between the sidelines. Sometimes what looks good on the chalkboard before the game doesn't work in the real world. That means that sometimes they completely erase the chalkboard and re-draw the game plan.

And you? When you're out on the field, you may have a play called, but the defense is shifting to a formation you didn't expect. You might have to call an audible here and there to beat the coverage. If you aren't into sports, that means even though you have a plan, you'll have to be flexible enough to adapt to unexpected changes in order to beat your opponent.

Remember the ultimate goal is winning. Not necessarily winning easily or on the first try, but winning by any means necessary. And against great opponents, winning may require a few roadblocks, tactical changes, and failed attempts before you get it just right.

**The way to win is to use whatever works.**



## **25. Use Your Animal Instinct**

*The only shame in dying incorrectly is to die a stupid and meaningless death. To die as a warrior means to have crossed swords and either won or lost without any consideration for winning or losing*  
~Miyamoto Musashi

From a distance, the lion is a beautiful animal. It lies still, calmly surveying the land. It elegantly trots back and forth, performing its daily tasks. It cheerfully plays with its cubs. If you didn't know any better, you could almost be convinced that it is just a big house cat that you could walk right up to and pet.

But when an intruder invades its territory, the lion transforms into nature's most savage beast. It instantly becomes a stalking predator that all creatures fear. It moves with speed and precision. It strikes with power and aggression. It kills without hesitation. It feeds with ferocity. The lion earns the title of “King of the Jungle.”

This killer instinct, however, exists in all animals — including us. Even the most passive and docile animals will fight with the spirit and passion of a lion if they are injured, protecting young, or are backed into a corner. All creatures can be ferocious and deadly when they are threatened or provoked. In the wild, this natural animal instinct is necessary for survival.

Warriors from many different cultures exhibited this same type of duality. During times of peace, they were compassionate, caring individuals. At home, they were husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters. They were teachers and caretakers, artists and musicians.

But experiencing swords swinging next to your head, arrows flying in the sky above you, and fellow countrymen falling slain next to your feet has a tendency to change who a person is and what he or she can become. Ordinary men and women transformed into deadly warriors on the battlefield. Fear, remorse, and morality were all discarded, and the animal instinct to fight, to survive, and to kill if necessary took over.

### **1. Tap into your animal instinct to survive**

Cancer is the most vicious, unrelenting, and deadly predator of all-time. You must use your animal instinct to fight back with aggression and to kill the enemy that threatens your life, your family, and your territory. You can't simply rely on human intelligence and over-analyzing in your situation. You can't just fight with statistics, studies, lab results, and a calculator. You can't succumb to the human emotions of fear, doubt, and self-pity. This is the warrior's battleground. This is nature's war. You have to find your animal instinct and jump into battle without hesitation.

We men and women can be so frail, so weak, and so vulnerable. Our animal instinct has been lost, buried beneath the luxuries of civilization and modern life. We are over-stimulated, overindulged, pampered, and underachieving. Many of us don't know how strong and courageous we can truly be until life-and-death circumstances put our backs up against a wall. We've all heard stories of the frail, old grandmother who picked up a car to save her grandchildren buried underneath it. In the right circumstances, we are capable of accomplishing anything.

Inside all of us there is a hero, a warrior, an animal that will do all that is necessary to protect its family and survive.

**In a fight for your life, you must find your animal instinct.**

## **26. The Hero's Formula: Discipline & Determination**

*He who wants to succeed should learn how to fight, to strive, and to suffer. You can acquire a lot in life if you are prepared to give up a lot to get it.*

*~Bruce Lee*

What separates elite warriors from those who lay fallen at their feet? What separates the champions from the runner-ups and wannabe competitors? Is it genetics or natural ability? There have been champions who were far less gifted than their opponents, but rose to the top anyway.

Is it speed or strength? Underdogs have toppled the favorites. Superior foes have fallen repeatedly.

Is it superior weapons, equipment, or technological advancement? Swords have beaten guns. Athletes from third-world countries have defeated competitors with all of the latest and greatest, cutting-edge advancements.

Is it intelligence, strategy, or superior coaching? Many wise men have sat in disbelief wondering how their best-laid plans went up in smoke. You win battles on the field, not on paper.

So what is the real key to achieving greatness? In the end, I believe it is limitless, extreme, and unwavering discipline and determination.

### **1. Learn from warrior cultures.**

Certain cultures had specific models for training and developing their warrior class. Their programs began in early childhood and consisted of intense training protocols. They practiced hours a day, every day, year after year. Many trained in poor conditions, with limited food supply and rest, to breed toughness. There was no mercy shown for injury, illness, or personal problems. This philosophy weeded out the weak-willed and inferior-spirited. Only those with incredible perseverance and determination could successfully complete such an intense regimen.

### **2. Learn from champion athletes.**

Champion athletes engage in the same type of rigorous training protocols to reach the elite levels of their sport. What we see in competition — the Olympics, the Super Bowl, the World Series, the World Championships — is a culmination of a lifelong dedication to the pursuit of perfection. A life, that in many instances is full of sacrifice, pain, suffering, setbacks, doubt, blood, sweat, and tears. What we see on TV is their moments of glory. What we don't see is the hours, days, months, years, and decades of hard work that led to that glory.

### **3. Find your own way to exhibit discipline and determination.**

Whether it is ancient civilizations, modern athletes, or you, the cancer warrior, the best of the best never quit. They are committed to achieving their goals no matter what it takes. Not time, nor odds, nor setbacks, nor great adversaries can stand in the way of

their chosen path. They'll sacrifice and work harder than everyone else to fulfill their missions. True warriors will overcome even the biggest of roadblocks to achieve what they've set out to achieve. Their mind can be broken, their body can be broken, but their spirits will never be broken. It's just not in their nature.

The cancer warrior must display such discipline and determination to be successful in their battle. There couldn't be a more legendary battle. There couldn't be a more formidable foe. There is no doubt that your body and mind will go through hell, but your spirit must remain strong and determined nonetheless.

Does this sound too intimidating? The recipe for success is discipline plus determination. Just like with cooking shows, when you learn a new recipe, it doesn't mean you have to become a professional chef and open a 5-Star restaurant. You can simply learn from the pros, and figure out how to apply it in your own kitchen to the best of your abilities.

**The recipe for success is discipline + determination. Get cooking!**

## **27. Honor Your Name and Inspire Others**

*Men are haunted by the vastness of eternity. And so we ask ourselves -- will our actions echo across the centuries? Will strangers hear our names long after we are gone and wonder who we were, how bravely we fought, how fiercely we loved?*  
~ Troy

The enemy that is cancer is not going anywhere. It is here to stay. It is the greatest disease of our time. It will continue invading our homes. It will continue attacking unsuspecting and innocent victims. It will continue collecting names for its trophy shelves. It is pure evil. You pick off one battalion of their army and a whole legion is right behind it. Their henchmen are coming in waves as far as the eye can see. This fight is never-ending.

### **1. Realize you are not just fighting your fight. You are fighting a Universal fight.**

Don't end up as just a statistic that fades away into eternity. In this Universal fight, we need heroes who fight back with every inch of their souls and who give others courage to do the same. We need legends whose stories provide inspiration for the next generation. We need tales of those who beat the odds, and motivated others to fight their own fight regardless of whatever the statistics say.

No matter the end result, if you fight a battle worth remembering, you will not only inspire those around you to bravely face their own struggles in life, you will inspire others for generations to come. I don't know if the next life exists. But this is one way for at least your name to achieve immortality.

**If you can live on in the hearts and memories of others you've inspired, you can truly live forever.**

## **28. Embrace the Role of the Underdog**

*Do not acknowledge the possibility that the enemy is stronger than you are. Do not accept the possibility that the enemy is smarter than you are in any way whatsoever... The Way of the warrior does not permit you to accept an inferior position to anything.*  
~Miyamoto Musashi

*Rudy, Rocky, Moneyball, 300, The Miracle on Ice*, etc., everyone loves a good underdog story. When the underdog happens to pull it off and win against all odds, it sends chills down our spines and inspires us ordinary men and women to pursue our own goals and dreams with renewed passion.

Why? Most of us are underdogs in life. Only a few are born into privilege. The odds are stacked against most of us right from the start. The story of a hero that has risen from the ashes gives the rest of us the most important emotion of all — a sense of hope, a belief that anything is possible.

### **1. The odds are meaningless. They are just a mere number on a sheet of paper.**

The odds? Ha! They are for gamblers, accountants, investors, statisticians, and analysts. They are not for once-in-a-generation champions or timeless heroes. If the odds always played out, there would be no true success stories. Yet I've heard numerous inspiring underdog stories in my lifetime.

When climbing a high mountain, if you look up and see how far you have to go, you might not even get started. But if you drop your head and just start putting one foot in front of the other, you'll start making your way up. Who knows? You might even make it all the way to the top. You can complete a journey that most would write off as impossible. And what a spectacular view you'll have at the top!

Don't pay attention to the odds, my friend. If it's a 5% success rate, so be it. Why can't you be one of the few exceptions? Why not you, why not now, at this moment in time? If someone else has achieved it, why the hell can't you? Demi-gods don't exist. You are a man or woman. Heroes are just mortal men and women too. You are capable of achieving what anyone else is capable of achieving. We all have a unique power within us to rise to the occasion. Some just have to dig deeper than others.

**The only time the odds ever drop to 0% is if you quit.**

## **29. Strike First**

*You must attack as quickly and directly as possible. You must be able to strike the enemy even should he go into a retreat posture. You must continue on, you must not hesitate, and you must be relentless in your conviction.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Take the initiative. Strike first. Set the tone. This tactic is taught in combat sports, “Walk to the center of the ring, punch him in the mouth, and show him in the first ten seconds that he is in there for a fight against a better man.”

It’s taught in race sports, “Blast out of the gates and make your opponent always be trying to just catch up.”

It’s taught in team sports, “Come out guns blazing and land the first blow. Drag them kicking and screaming into the trenches and show them they are in for a war.”

Don’t sit back on your heels and react. Act first. You know the enemy you face. You know the weapons you have at your disposal. So launch a full scale and aggressive, offensive attack. There is no defense like a good offense. Keep them on their toes, scrambling to gain their wits and composure. Throw them off their game plan by going for their throat immediately. Instill doubt in your opponent. Make them question whether they messed with the wrong person.

Cancer is making you fight for your life. So you need to show it that you are going to make it fight for its. You will not go quietly. You will not go easily. Establish this tone right from the beginning. Bullies don’t do well when they are the ones bullied.

**Start fast, start strong, and win from the beginning.**

### **30. Crush Your Enemy**

*You must stay after the enemy or he will have a chance to reposition himself, possibly making an even stronger second attack. When you go for the kill, go for the kill. Do not relinquish your position through any weakness on your part. To do so is deadly and will cost you the battle.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Once you strike first, and you put your opponent on their heels, you must follow through and finish the job. Don't give them a chance to recover. As they say in MMA, "Never leave it in the hands of the judges." Go for the finish. Go for the knockout blow. Go for the kill. Be relentless.

#### **1. Never lighten up your attack.**

You start strong. You break bad habits and establish good habits. You're consistently eating better, taking better care of yourself, being active to make your body stronger, cutting out unnecessary stressors, following the protocol, and doing everything you need to do with your treatment program.

Time passes and you get an update — positive results. Tumors are shrinking or are gone, surgery was successful, and you are cancer-free or at least in remission. So you sigh in relief and decide to lighten up. You stop exercising, you eat more junk, and you are inconsistent with your follow-up treatment program. In short, you allow a bunch of bad habits to creep back in to your everyday life.

This is a mistake, my friend. You must crush your enemy, because if you give it a chance, if it detects the slightest crack in your armor, cancer will come back in full force, stronger than ever.

In this case, you don't crush your enemy with swords or guns or punches. You crush him with your daily habits and choices. You crush him by staying on track with your treatment. You crush him by eating nutritious foods that support your body instead of crappy foods that inflame it. You crush him by performing activities that strengthen your body, not useless activities that deplete it. Stay the course, take care of yourself, and make good habits automatic.

**Never give your opponent a second chance, because his second chance may end up being your last.**



## **31. Never Stop Learning and Growing**

*Daily discovery and understanding is the process of growth and learning. I am happy because I am growing daily and honestly don't know where my ultimate limit lies. To be certain, every day there can be a revelation or a new discovery that I can obtain.*

*~Bruce Lee*

Every day is an opportunity to learn and grow. It's an opportunity to become a little stronger both mentally and physically. It's a chance to gain more knowledge about both the outside world and your internal self — your strengths and weaknesses. With that approach, on a daily basis you become a better warrior, a better fighter, and most importantly, a better person.

This battle you are bravely taking on is going to teach you more about yourself than you can currently imagine. Be open to growing throughout the process. They say with age comes wisdom. But true wisdom comes through experience. This fight is one of the most powerful and unique experiences of all time.

### **1. Make the educational process ongoing.**

You started this journey by getting to know your enemy. That process is worth repeating:

1. Ask your doctors, nurses, and healthcare providers questions.
2. Read books.
3. Research on the Internet (from credible sources only).
4. Talk to other patients.
5. Find out the secrets and strategies of other cancer survivors.
6. Seek the help of qualified professionals.
7. Tell your circle your story. It seems as if everyone knows someone who has battled cancer. Someone in your circle may be able to connect you with another cancer patient or survivor.
8. Join a cancer support group.
9. Contact a cancer society or foundation and ask for resources.
10. Ask your family and friends to assist you in this process.

I think you should continue that process every step of the way. As you go through your battle and gain personal experience, old answers may take on new meanings. You may gain a new or deeper insight into a philosophy or approach. Maybe something you couldn't hear or see in the past will become crystal-clear. Maybe something that seemed confusing or untrue now makes perfect sense. Maybe you'll make a new friend or two along the way.

A mind and a spirit that is always open to learning and growing shines just a little bit brighter. It's like a snake shedding the dull, flaky, and lifeless skin it has outgrown.

### **Be a lifelong student and never stop learning.**

## **32. Do Your Duty**

*Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable; however, they who aim at it, and persevere, will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable.*

*~Bruce Lee*

No one should be forced to do anything they don't want to do in life. That's one of the freedoms that most of us take for granted here in America. We have the right and the privilege to choose whatever path we desire. Some have a much harder road than others, for sure. But ultimately, for most of us, what we decide to pursue in life comes down to choice.

If an athlete doesn't think he can endure grueling training sessions, if he can't stand a little pain, if he doesn't want to sacrifice some of the luxuries of the average, and if he doesn't want to challenge himself against great competition, he shouldn't choose to try to be a champion.

But if he does make that choice, he owes it to himself to dive in, put forth his greatest effort, and leave his heart and soul on the battlefield. That way, when he walks away, he will have no regrets regardless of the outcome. If you are just going to "half-ass" it, or just go through the motions because theoretically that is what you are supposed to do, you might as well not even start. Find something else you are more passionate about.

### **1. Once you make your choice to fight, do your duty and give it your best effort.**

Fighting cancer is an even more daunting task than trying to become a champion in sports. You will have to sacrifice. You will have to persevere. You will have to endure. You will have to face insurmountable obstacles and odds. So it would certainly be understandable if you decided to walk away and not fight.

But if you decide to pick up a sword and fight, you owe it to yourself and your support group to give it your best effort. If you do that, you can walk away with no regrets, regardless of the outcome.

### **If you choose to fight, do your duty, do what you promised to do, and do it to the best of your ability.**

### **33. Overcome All Obstacles**

*Are you going to make your obstacles stepping stones to your dreams, or stumbling blocks because unknowingly you let negativeness, worries, fear, and so forth, to take over? Believe me that in every big thing or achievement there are always obstacles, big or small, and the reaction one shows to such obstacles is what counts, not the obstacle. There is no such thing as defeat until you admit one to yourself, but not until then.*

*~Bruce Lee*

*Each and every attack you make must be done with full force and authority. You cannot attack half-heartedly. When you finish with one technique, you must immediately continue on with yet another and another until you have attained your goal, which is to destroy the enemy.*

*~Miyamoto Musashi*

Spartan warriors lived by a simple credo, "Never Retreat, Never Surrender." No matter what the odds, no matter what the challenges, no matter what the consequences, Spartans never backed down from those who threatened their way of life.

The Samurai Warriors lived by a similar code, "Death before Dishonor or Defeat." Once these noble warriors started down a certain path, they never wavered. They never questioned their decisions. They never backed down regardless of how big the challenge or how insurmountable the odds. They fought to the bitter end or glorious win. Swords and arrows could pierce their bodies, but nothing could pierce their spirits. They believed there is no such thing as defeat until you admit it is possible. Hence, to the true warrior, there was no such thing as defeat!

There are many parallel credos and codes in the athletic world. "Leave everything on the field." "Play until the final buzzer sounds." "It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings." A true athlete never surrenders. They never lay down. They never give in. They never quit. No matter what the score says, they give his or her all until the clock hits double zeroes — for pride, for honor.

#### **1. Keep your fighting spirit.**

The cancer warrior must face their battle with the same spirited passion. You must set your mind, body, and spirit down a sturdy, unwavering path. You must commit before your treatment begins that you will never retreat, never surrender, and never give up hope no matter what unfolds. If you didn't know it was necessary to commit to winning until you read this book, there's still time. Commit to it now. Never give in no matter how bad it gets. You will fight a furious and passionate fight as long as your heart beats and blood pumps through your veins.

**For a true warrior, the battle is never over.**

### **34. Legends Live Forever**

There may come a time for some of you when treatment is no longer an option. Surgery may damage a vital organ, you can't use radiation, you've built up a tolerance to chemotherapy drugs, they are no longer effective, there are no matches in clinical trials, and no appropriate alternative therapies are left.

Or you may just come to a crossroads where you need to decide whether you want to continue along. Maybe the treatment is causing more side effects and damage than the cancer itself? Maybe you just want to spend the remaining time you have left on your own terms, fueling your life with experiences rather than IV drips? That is a way to fight back and not let cancer get the best of you, too.

A good friend said his father once told him, "I have to decide whether I want to add meaningless time to my life, or meaningful life to the rest my time." He chose to stop treatment, live out his life, and "go out the way he wanted to go out."

If it is at all comforting to you, I believe that one meaningful moment is worth a thousand wasted ones. One meaningful experience can fuel your spirit through an eternity.

#### **1. Explore all options with your family and friends and decide what's best for YOU.**

If that time comes, huddle up with your team and decide on the best course of action. There is no right answer. There is only the right answer for YOU, given your individual circumstances. No one has a right to judge what you decide is best for you. Even if you retire, those who watched you fight will know and remember you as a great warrior forever.

The hardest step for any athlete to take, especially elite athletes, is to walk away from the game at the right time. They've fought valiantly, accomplished greatness, experienced success, reached the pinnacle, and tasted glory. The mind and the spirit are still strong and want to keep going on forever. But there comes a time when the body can no longer keep up.

When the time is right, even heroes move on, pass the torch to the next generation of warriors, and ride off into the sunset — forever remembered as legends. Only you can decide whether that time has come for you.

#### **2. Walk away with your head held high.**

There is no shame if you gave everything you had, fought to the best of your ability, and decide it is time to move on. We remember the athlete for his or her career, not the retirement party. The same is true of the cancer warrior. It's not the final outcome that ultimately matters; it's the totality of the battle. Those around you will always remember:

1. How bravely you fought, how many people you inspired along the way, and how you motivated others around you to face their own struggles in life.

2. How, for whatever time you fought, you dedicated yourself to your craft, fulfilled your duty, and left it all on the battlefield.
3. How much you taught all of us about honor, courage, perseverance, and the warrior spirit — not through meaningless words, but through meaningful action.

### **3. Walk on to whatever is next with confidence.**

You bravely faced the worst this life had to offer with a smile on your face. You are well equipped to face that which comes next — whatever it is that you believe in.

A Wave Man rolls with life — taking whatever comes with a smile, always adapting and flowing like water. This approach eliminates stress and anxiety, makes the journey more enjoyable, and gives you a decent shot at attaining that ultimate goal in life: peace of mind.

Why should death be any different? Take whatever comes, and whatever the next life brings, with a smile.

### **4. Know that you will be remembered, and your story will be told.**

*"Remember us." As simple an order as a king can give. "Remember why we died." For he did not wish tribute or song, nor monuments, nor poems of war and valor. His wish was simple. "Remember us", he said to me. That was his hope.*

~ 300

It has been the greatest honor of my life to ride with you throughout your journey. But I must leave you now, my friend, for the world needs to know what happened here.

I will tell your story. Your family will tell your story. Your friends will tell your story. The people will tell your story. It's a grand one for sure. And your story will go on inspiring others for countless generations to come.

What you've done will not be forgotten. Ever. Your brave battle against such a vast, powerful, and ruthless enemy will give others the courage to stand up and fight, instead of helplessly hiding and cowering in fear. You have shown them the Warrior's Way — to take up a sword and shield, and fight their own war regardless of the odds, regardless of the consequences, regardless of the outcome.

You've shown us all that cancer is not immortal, that indeed it can bleed, and that if enough of us unite and fight with the same will and determination as you have, one day, cancer will fall. It may not fall today, it may not fall tomorrow, but it will fall. Before this war is over, cancer will lie slain at our feet or it will be forced to retreat like cowards back into the sea.

**Your story will inspire an entire army of cancer warriors to rise up and fight. Your legend will give us all hope. One day, we will win, and you will have played the biggest part in that victory.**

## BOOK III

### THE STAND

## **1. Make Your Stand**

*Nathan: They'll come in waves of a thousand. And they have the howitzers.*

*Katsumoto: It makes no difference. They will come, and we will make our stand.*

*-- The Last Samurai.*

If you've been diagnosed with cancer, then you have no choice but to make your stand. It's as simple and straightforward as that. I wish you the best of luck in your fight. There are very few heroes left in this world that we can look up to. You are now one of them. I hope these strategies have given you valuable weapons that you can use throughout your journey.

If you are a family member or friend of a cancer warrior, you have a choice. You can stand idly by or you can join this epic fight. Which will you choose? If you'd like to make that stand with us, all I ask is one simple favor. If you think this book might help someone you know, please share any parts, or all of it, with him or her. You have my full permission.

If you think the overall message of these strategies are valuable, but "the warrior theme" will not resonate with that person, or it has not resonated with you, I'm fine with that too. Share some different books, quotes, or strategies that you think will provide them with the motivation they are going to need throughout their battle. I believe the message is more important than the messenger.

Warrior, martial art, and sports psychology strategies are what resonated with my family the most. They are what helped us throughout our journey, thus they are what formed the foundation of this book. You can only authentically write about what you've studied, have successfully applied, and truly believe in.

But maybe you and yours have a completely different "style". Maybe you are more motivated by the words and wisdom of different religions, spiritual paths, philosophers, political figures, motivational speakers, community leaders, psychologists, self-help experts, athletes, celebrities, etc. That's great. You should use whatever strategies are useful, from whatever resources that exist, to give yourself the best chance at winning your war.

Don't undervalue yourself or your knowledge. Don't underestimate your ability to help those around you that are struggling. Every person on this Earth has a few good stories to tell, and a few life lessons to teach.

## 2. Write What You Can't Say

Some things are best left unsaid. This is true. When my wife visited her dad for the last time, she had a whole list of things she thought she was going to say. But when the time came, none of it was necessary. They connected and made their peace in a different way, without words.

Her dad was a Hawaiian musician, she a hula dancer, and they used to perform at each other's side. At the hospital, they shared one last song together. She felt that spiritual connection was more meaningful than anything she could have ever said. Thus their time together ended just as it should have. Free of regrets. Beautiful. Perfect.

However, not all of us are as talented, or have developed such an unspoken spiritual connection via a cultural tradition or craft. So on the flip side, some things *need* to be said. Yet sometimes, we can't always find the right words to express our deepest emotions, or we can't find the right time or appropriate situation in which to express them. I know I have struggled with this personally.

On matters of the heart, there are never perfect words, and there is never a perfect time. So stop waiting for either of them. Whether you are a patient, a family member, or a friend, if you lose the chance to say something you know you want to say, it will eat away at you forever. To be honest, we should all be living with that understanding regardless of our situation. The end can come for any of us, at any time.

I should take a step back and say that there is nothing that must be done. We all deal with these situations differently. There is no one Right Way. But for those of you who do want to say something but just can't quite get it out, I have a small suggestion for you.

Write it down first. Just get it out of your head, heart, and soul. Maybe once you write it down, you can more easily transition into saying it. I know that may seem biased coming from a writer, but you don't need to be a professional writer to follow this advice. By the way, I don't consider myself a professional writer. I'm just a guy who likes to share what has helped me in life, and it just so happens that I sometimes do that best through writing.

Guy Kawasaki once compared the process of writing something pure, meaningful, and valuable to vomiting your guts out onto the page. Later on, you can worry about sifting through the mess and cleaning it up, which equals the editing process.

But I say why even edit? It loses its authenticity. What's going to touch your loved one's soul, eloquent prose and grammatically correct transitions, or real words straight from your heart? Don't worry. This is real life, not an English classroom. You will not be graded.

Once your message is out of your head and heart, if you still can't bring yourself to say it, that's OK too. Now you can give that person you love the most meaningful letter you've ever given anyone. You will sleep much better at night having done so.



### **3. A Final Letter**

*The “artist of life” is willing to bare his soul for the purpose of honest communication and not get caught up in societal role-play (self-image creation). – John Little, Artist of Life.*

Sometimes the best way to help those around you is just by being an open book, and authentically sharing your own personal journey and experiences – the good and the bad, the ups and the downs, the triumphs and the setbacks, the answers and the questions, the valuable lessons and the mistakes. I don’t think any of us have it all truly figured out. But if we keep learning from each other, maybe we’ll get somewhere?

I shared the tip in the previous section because it helped me tremendously during the time I spent at my dad’s side. There were so many things I wanted to say to him, but I could never seem to find the right words to say it. So I took my own advice, and wrote them down first. I can’t express how glad I am that I did.

This book is dedicated to my dad, and it is meant to help motivate those battling cancer around the world. I will admit that selfishly, maybe it is a way for me to somehow stay connected with my dad, and ensure that his energy, lessons, and legacy live on.

As a cancer warrior, you should know and understand that there are people all around you that love you. There are people that are rooting for you. There are people that are proud of you. There are people that are motivated and inspired by you. You have an infinite number of reasons to pick up your sword and shield and fight.

I hope sharing this final letter I wrote to my dad sums that all up somehow. Maybe one day our paths will cross again my friend. Until then, take care of yourself. You are my new hero.

*Hey Dad,*

*(Fictitious initials used for privacy.)*

*I wrote this letter to say a couple of things that have been on my mind, and I’ve wanted to tell you for a while now.*

*I haven’t been able to tell you in person because the timing wasn’t right, or I really didn’t know how to start the conversation, or simply because we’re guys, and guys don’t really talk about this kind of stuff.*

*I also know that you’re physically wiped out, and there is so much on your mind already. When we come around, it’s probably nice to just hang out and relax and to not have to do anything, listen to anyone, or think about anything.*

*You don’t want to be bombarded with deep, emotional conversation with your crazy son that reads way too much philosophy stuff.*

*So I figured I would write what I’ve been wanting to say, because I can’t seem to get it out when I’m hanging out with you. And I think you should know how I feel about you.*

*After all, part of how I make a living now is as a writer, so I should be able to express it better through writing anyway. It’s better than stumbling and trying to come up with the right words in person and probably crying the whole time through it.*

*I know these last few years have been an incredibly rough road for you. None of us can know exactly what you are going through, both physically and mentally. The chemo, the radiation, the feeding tubes, the surgeries, the side effects! Damn, it’s been the kitchen sink thrown at you huh?*

*We can only imagine how difficult it must be. I'm sure not a day has gone by that you haven't faced some kind of struggle.*

*No matter what you decide to do moving forward, or how this thing ends, I just wanted to say: (1) you have my full support no matter what. (2) How much the way you've battled has motivated and inspired me in my own life.*

*I've watched how bravely you've fought, what you've persevered through, how you've kept moving forward regardless of the setbacks or circumstances.*

*Dad, you've given me the courage and determination to face the struggles in my own life, head-on. Shit, whatever obstacles or challenges I'll have to face in life are minor compared to what you've had to go through. I know if end up being half the man you are, I'll do just fine the rest of my life.*

*But that's the way it has always been with us, huh? We've never had the sit down, father-to-son, do this or that, type lectures. And I've never needed them, because you've taught me more about life and what it means to be a good, honorable man than I could have ever asked for — not through meaningless words, but through infinitely more meaningful action.*

*You're one of those leaders and teachers by example, which I think is the best kind.*

*I know how much you sacrificed — how you spent some of your prime years working two jobs from sun up to sundown, giving away all of your money, sleeping on your friend's couch, etc. — to make sure we had everything we needed growing up.*

*The type of man you are, I'm sure you just saw that as your duty, as what you had to do. But I see that as a choice you made, a very hard and unselfish choice. And I appreciate what you gave up to provide for us.*

*Every time I start complaining about how busy I am or how hard I'm working to get ahead, I always tell J.D., "Shit, think about what my dad had to do for all of those years. I got no business whining"*

*I know how much you loved us unconditionally, even when we didn't always know it, appreciate it, or return it. You always wanted to be there for us even when you couldn't, or weren't allowed to be. But none of that matters now anyway. I think we've done more than a good enough job making up for it, and for any time we might have lost because of the situation.*

*You've always welcomed all of us, and our extended families and friends, into your home with open arms. You have a way of making everyone feel loved, accepted, and as part of the family right away.*

*You've always encouraged and supported us in whatever we do and whatever paths we've pursued in life, regardless of how vastly different those paths are — traditional, not-so-traditional, whatever. I never felt I had to do anything other than what I wanted to do in life, or be anyone other than who I wanted to be, in order to make you proud.*

*That's a great feeling to have as a kid growing up into a man, and I think it's a large part of why I've been able to find the path that is right for me, and why I'm one of the lucky few who is truly happy.*

*You've always made us feel special, loved, and important, even through times when we were struggling, and maybe not living up to our full potential. It's much easier to criticize or turn your back than it is to always be there, ready to help. It's no surprise that I've always felt I could come to you whenever I needed.*

*No one has ever felt any pressure to impress you. Your only want for us is that we're ultimately happy, doing OK, and all looking out for each other.*

*Again, that's a great feeling to have in a world where it seems as if everyone is judging you. Your home has always been one of the few places in this world where we can go, and be loved and accepted no matter what.*

*Now I know why you had to have so many kids. Maybe you think it was an accident. But I think it was fate. You needed all 7 to pass on all of the good qualities that you have within you.*

*"M" got your willingness to sacrifice her comfort, freedom, and much of her own life to help raise and take care of her family. She's the rock of this family and her own, the foundation, just like you.*

*"W" got your hospitality, friendly style, and approach of treating everyone like family. Much like you, he's a guy that people just gravitate towards, want to talk to, and hang out with. And he's been the glue that has kept the family together through tough times.*

*"T" got your drive, work ethic, and willingness to do whatever it takes to make sure his family is taken care of, and has everything they could ever need. He's an unselfish provider, a leader by example.*

*"B" got your warrior spirit, the way in which he faces his challenges in life, head-on, whether they are medical or personal, whether they are fair or not. You two are the type of guys that just bravely keep putting one foot in front of the other and marching on, regardless of the circumstances.*

*"D" got your authenticity and the confidence to just be who he is, regardless of what anyone else thinks. He's going through his own struggles right now, but he has your blood in him. I know he'll eventually come out the other side and be just fine because of that. You had to start over in your 40's. He can do it too.*

*"L" is probably the most like you. I think we're all good people, but he's the only one of us that is just truly good to the core. He got your compassion. He got your big heart that is sometimes way too big for its own good.*

*Me? I got your cheeks and big smile I guess.*

*We all got a few bits and pieces, but it takes all seven of us to add up to the person that you are. You're truly a once in a multiple generations' guy.*

*I guess what I really want to tell you is you're the best friend, role model, dad, and personal hero a guy could ask for. I feel lucky for every moment I've got to spend with you, and will get to spend with you in the future.*

*I love you, my friend. – Nate*

#### **4. About the Author**

Nate Miyaki is an author, athlete, speaker, and coach. He maintains a fitness education, warrior philosophy, and motivational blog at <http://natemiyaki.com>.

He was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley. He thinks cancer sucks, and hates it with a passion. He misses his Dad, his best friend, and his hero, very much.

To join Nate's book club and be notified about new publications, visit <http://natemiyaki.com/miyaki-book-club-signup>.

## **5. How This Book Was Born**

My family dealt with my dad's battle in a variety of ways – cards, comforting words, taking his mind off of it with parties, sharing stories, vacations, passing the time watching sports, etc. These were all great gestures and acts that he appreciated.

I dealt with it the only way I know how – writing. The pen is my sword. My entire career has been spent in the health & fitness industry. I've been able to stay in business as a writer, speaker, and personal trainer for close to 15 years. I've written fitness books, and articles for a variety of magazines. I've worked with a variety of professional and competitive athletes. I've also worked with busy professionals and regular folks just looking to improve their biomarkers of health, lose weight, and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Part of my success as a coach is that I'm good at motivating people to do the things they DON'T want to do, in order to achieve the goals they DO want. I can't make them do it, I can't do it for them, but I can certainly use my skills and strategies to help them find their own personal motivation that will carry them through their journey. The best programs in the world, in any endeavor, are meaningless unless they are actually followed.

After 15 years of working with people, you get to learn what makes people tick, what trips people up, what causes them to veer off the path, what helps them get back on it, common roadblocks that stall progress, and common strategies that help them blast through plateaus. I guess you could say you develop “street psychology” skills.

I racked my brain to figure out the best way I could make a difference in my family's ongoing battle with cancer, the best way I can help my friends that are fighting the disease, and the best way I can help you and yours who are now our extended family in this Universal struggle. I figured I needed to do what I do best – write and coach.

I can't say I did it alone. My wife's formal education is in psychology – a Bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago and Master's degree from New York University. She also has been a NCAA athlete and coach. Her input helped me refine these strategies.

And simply watching my dad fight, and taking notes along the way, is what truly formed these strategies. He was a man of few words, but one of significant action. It is one thing to write and talk about strategies. It is another to live out those strategies every day of your life. The latter is the best type of teacher to learn from. So in all honesty, you are learning more from my dad than from me. I'm just an ordinary man delivering the teachings of a true hero.

At the same time my dad started his treatment, I was working on a motivational book for athletes. I had studied various warrior and martial art cultures and found that many of their traditional philosophies could be applied to the training, competition, and overall life of modern day athletes.

Athletes could use principles like "constant and continual improvement" from the Samurai or "never retreat, never surrender" from the Spartans, combine them with sports psychology strategies, and apply it to their own training to strengthen their character, find their warrior spirit, and persevere through the rigors of competition.

Although a petty comparison, the life of a competitive athlete and the life of a cancer patient share many similarities. Athletes persevere through gut wrenching training

sessions, meticulous diets, injuries, setbacks, challenges, and battles with fierce competition, all to become a champion. At the same time, cancer patients must persevere through horrible treatments, symptoms, and side effects in order to achieve the end goal – defeating the disease and becoming cancer free. The only difference is fighting for your life is way more important than fighting for a championship.

I guess personal experiences subconsciously influence our focus. As I worked through each warrior principle, I found myself thinking more and more about how patients could use it in their battle with cancer, and less and less about athletes. Certainly, the cancer patient could be viewed as a modern day warrior. Their battle is not with a human enemy or even a supernatural beast, but with a disease. They fight not for their land or country, or titles or accolades, but for their life. What greater battle could there be? What greater warrior could there be? What greater cause could there be?

That's how this book was born. I guess this vagabond finally found a worthy cause to give up his wandering ways for, a cause to give up his life and fight for.



## **6. Suggested Reading**

Good books can be great weapons in your ongoing battle. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Lee, Bruce. *Striking Thoughts: Bruce Lee's Wisdom for Daily Living*. Compiled and Edited by John Little. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2000.

[Striking Thoughts](#)

2. Lee, Bruce. *Artist of Life*. Compiled and Edited by John Little. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1999.

[Artist of Life](#)

3. Musashi, Miyamoto. *The Book of Five Rings*. English translation by Steve Kaufman. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1994.

[The Book of Five Rings](#)