



CANCER AND RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

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Life being what it is you make the best of your environment no matter the circumstances. It is the same with relationships and for those who are married or in long term partnerships. My wife Yovanna and I have known of each other since the 14 September 2000. We met on line and within another twelve months we were married.

Only a very few close friends know of the challenges we both faced and how during those dark days

Yovanna and I remained close despite the numerous unwanted issues not of our making confronted us. Apart from the love for each other which we both knew was very special, I would be lying to readers if I said that we did not have differences of opinion, disagreements and huge arguments over the challenges we faced. Suffice to say, the close bond we had assisted us during the dark days, some of which were not resolved for a number of undisclosed years. Still we kept the bond between us strong.

In 2015 after a successful European holiday, we both returned to Australia at different times as a result of responsibilities in Australia and that of our place of Birth. Yes both of us were born in Greece which also unites us amongst many other threads of love. I was still not feeling the best and we decided that maybe a blood test will be able to provide clues regarding my consist unhealthy state.

[I have already chronicled my journey for the past five years](#) and have it had it published on the net and in the news media. My thanks to the many individuals who have assisted in saving my life and provided the ongoing support post stem cell therapy have been published elsewhere. The reason for publishing the journey was to raise the hopes of those going through a similar ordeal. An ordeal not of our choosing but did not wish on any one. The following letter below is being published with the approval of my lovely wife Yovanna who in her own words has reflected on the day we were advised of the body riddled with stage four cancer.

Readers may not believe this, I am normally a reserved person, an introvert if you like, despite the appearance I demonstrate on line and when people meet me for the first time. As such, when my wife sent the letter to me, I almost broke down for it was the first time that she had opened up to me about her feelings and thoughts of that day.

Suffice to say I was touched very much. I have therefore published her letter online to show that when confronted with a life threatening disease, it is very important that spouses, partners, family, friends and colleagues support those undergoing treatment for an illnesses that has yet to be overcome successfully. This is my wife's thoughts for the day:



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Before & After

A DAY I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

Memory August 21, 2015, Yovanna Adamis

On Friday 21 August 2015, 9am, while I was at work preparing to go to the lecture theatre where I was to deliver my presentation to the Vet Science students, I received a call from Pete's doctor, Dr Laith Guyana to tell me that Pete's been diagnosed with Leukaemia and I should meet him at the Olivia Newton John/Austin hospital, one of Australia's top teaching hospitals, asap.

My mind was racing. I kind of knew, and I kind of didn't know what leukaemia was. And as I'm driving to the hospital I was asking myself, is leukaemia a type of cancer or is it another blood disease? The first doctor I met at ONJ was Dr Julian Grabek, who spoke to me about what would happen next, but it was all a blur, I didn't retain anything, except that Pete would be admitted and it would be a long drawn process from here.

The diagnosis changed several times. From Leukaemia at the outset, to having an uncommon Lymphoma that behaved like Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL), a lymphoma in leukemic phase. The next diagnosis was 'Blastic Mantle Cell Lymphoma B-cell type'. The final diagnosis was "Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma" (DLBCL), an aggressive type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma which is not curable and about 30% of patients make it to five years

Financial security VS Stem cell harvesting security. Until 26th September 2015, the consulting team of doctors did not have a clear game plan and they knew Pete 'wasn't' out of the woods yet'. It was on this date that the decision, led by Dr Simon He, Head of the Bone Marrow Transplantation, that they would harvest Pete's stem cells as a security in case the current chemo protocol didn't work.

The game plan was then put in place: a Bone Marrow Biopsy was done on October 7th, followed by another PET scan, followed by G-CSF injections for two weeks to boost cell production, and if all went ok he would undergo the Stem Cell harvesting on 22 October. The procedure was a success; they needed to collect 2 billion cells from the bone marrow in the pelvic area, and were able to actually collect 2.6 billion – lots to spare Pete! Stripped of his immunity because of the removal and re-introduction of stem cells, all of Pete's childhood immunization was wiped out. Yes, you guessed it, he had to receive all his childhood vaccines all over again – measles, chicken pox, etc.

The long road to recovery. For us it was at least six months of uncertainty about the future. After many PET/CAT scans, blood transfusions, changes of PICC and Hickman lines, painful G-CSF injections, bone marrow biopsy, stem cell harvest, and five rounds of a chemo cocktail known as R-CHOP, reaching the five-year mark was surreal. Finally, on January 16th 2016 we were told that Pete would be getting out of hospital at the end of the month, which was after this fifth and final chemo. This was followed by numerous checkups and tests over the next four-six months but we were optimistic that he would be on the road to recovery soon after that.

The rest as they say is history. Anyone who has gone through cancer and chemotherapy treatment will understand that each day, then, as is each day now, is to be cherished. We sacrificed time apart as a couple during the four years following chemo treatment so that Pete can be given the best chance possible for full recovery. Although not the easiest thing to do when couples are apart, I would do this again if it meant giving you the best chance to be on the 'cancer survivor list'.

I love you Pete, and I'm so glad you are here today, enjoying life to its fullest, especially being able to go back to your birth place and in your paternal home.

Love,
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