

Comprehensive Cancer Care: Integrating Complementary & Alternative Therapies
The Spirit of Healing and the Healing of the Spirit
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They didn't tell you I said I'm not coming, the first three or four times I was asked, but Jim did convince me that it was a meaningful thing to do. What's meaningful perhaps in many ways is the meeting. Maybe more important than what you hear is that it is happening. I know some of you may have noticed the atheists' meeting upstairs. I'll convince you there's a God before we're done, because it's Sunday, and it's time for your sermon. One of my wife's lines is, "What happens when you cross an agnostic with a Jehovah's witness? Someone knocks on your door for no apparent reason."

Twenty-one years ago I couldn't take being a surgeon anymore. I don't have a surgeon's personality. I was an artist. I decided to be a surgeon because I had good hands. It was very painful being a surgeon. One of my patients, sitting as you're sitting, at a workshop, was sitting next to me. She had breast cancer, and she changed my life with that simple statement that became the title of my third book. She said, "I need to know how to live between office visits." I thought, I don't have to feel like a failure. I can help people live. I didn't know much about living, but I quickly read a lot of books. What was interesting to me, of course, was that if you help people live, it's therapeutic. I will only try to impress you with one piece of information this morning, and this is it. There are compulsive organizations that want to tell you how much time you have left to speak. I stole the sign, because when your time is up they show you this. I want you to understand that, for everybody in this room, someday your time will be up. You have a limited amount of time here. Understand that, and live your life accordingly.

If you don't like living where you're living, move now. If you don't like your job, move now. If you don't want to wear a tie anymore, take it off. When you learn you have cancer of the pancreas and two months to live, you buy a new house and take your tie off and live four and a half years. Remember those things.

I noticed that enjoying life led to longer life. I wrote to the American Cancer Society, and they said, "You're crazy." I wrote to the National Cancer Institute saying I want to do some research on mind and body. They said, "You're nuts," too. I said to the American Cancer Society, "Can I sit in your group so I can become a better doctor?" They said, "You don't belong there. You're a doctor. You don't have cancer." That's why I started my own groups.

Everyone isn't interested in surviving, believe me. I sent 100 letters to my patients saying, "Come on, I'll help you live a longer, better life," and only a dozen women showed up. I realized I don't know the people I'm taking care of. I'm trying to get them well, and they're not interested. Some people are trying to die, or God is a problem. Religion is a problem. They're atheists. I'm a Jewish Christian Buddhist Muslim Hindu Confucianist Taoist, because it's the wisdom that's there.

If you talk about survival behavior, you don't need my lecture. Go pick up the Hindu writings. You want self-transformation? Action, wisdom, devotion, and meditation. If you study long-term cancer survivors, what do you find out? They take action, they seek knowledge, they have spiritual support, and they meditate and visualize. If we were taught that a long time ago, we wouldn't have to suffer, go through difficulties, and then write our books.

Most of the books that are written don't tell you anything new. Read the old books. Learn the wisdom of the sages. It will help you survive. I also want to come up with a new word. We were discussing this in one of the meetings yesterday. It's called a "bondmidy."

There's no longer a mind and a body, it's a bondmidy. We're a unit, we're not parts. Just remember that. I have to read you this poem too, because if you came to this workshop to not die, I want to make something clear to you.

“They said if you cook the veggies too long you take out all the vitamins, so I ate only steamed veggies, peeled the skin off my chicken, cut the fat from my beef, stopped eating red meat, took two huge vitamins, stopped regular coffee, only decaf, no sugar, just honey, cut out soda for fruit juice, 1% low fat milk, exercise three times a week, watch very little TV, no salt on the food, green plants in the house, cotton shirts, believe in massage, and once went to a psychotherapist. Go for long walks and runs, think Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson are great, I speak to Puerto Ricans and Christian and Jewish friends, eat roughage. I sit near the back of the plane, use organic fertilizer, support women's lib, don't park in handicapped spots, feed the birds in the winter. I'm nice to old people, I buy Girl Scout cookies, I wear long underwear, I have a stick shift car, I believe in positive thinking, I wouldn't touch a cigarette, I ask my friends not to smoke, I have a wood stove, and I hike.

“One day I took a leak and out came blood instead. On my way into the office to have it checked out I had to hold the door for some real fat old lady because she had a ham sandwich in one hand and had to throw away her cigarette with the other. The doctor said I had cancer inside of me the size of a small football masquerading as my kidney.

‘What vitamins do you use to get rid of it?’

‘The scalpel.’

‘But there's no reason for me to have it, I know. What if you leave it there?’

‘It will get bigger and you're going to die.’

‘Eventually?’

‘Now.’

‘Take it out, then. I started a long book and I want to finish it.’ And so he did, and I feel great, and I’m jogging again and sitting in every sauna and whirlpool I can get into because I deserve it. But I am going to have to sit down with a glass of tequila and rethink the rest of this bullshit, man.”

The words of a physician. A woman put it very well when she tried to stop chemotherapy, and did, and her doctor yelled at her. She said, “Look, there are a lot of side effects to chemotherapy.” He said, “Yeah, there a lot of side effects to cancer, too,” to convince her she could die. And she said, “Yes, there are a lot of side effects, and some of them are quite wonderful.”

To quote a doctor, this is what makes me sad. It’s a blessing, really. He has cancer. “I have been told when I am going to die. It allows me to prioritize the time I have left. I can hug and kiss my kids every day, have fun playing with them, talk about their future.”

Don’t wait until somebody tells you when you’re going to die to go home and love your kids. The kids know it, and to quote a twelfth grader, “Sometimes it takes a tragedy to hit families before their priorities are put in order. Don’t wait for a tragedy to happen to your child, or your family, or your aging parent, before you tell them, ‘I love you and I’m glad you’re alive.’” Again, if you bring the love and the laughter into your life, then you live a complete life. To me, and I mean this literally, it’s not about the number of years, but whether you have done what you’re supposed to do with the years that you have.

I gave you the one bit of information. The other part I’d like to do is bring inspiration. Why are you here? What’s the point of life? I only have one goal in my life relating to you. It’s to get you to take as good care of yourself as you do your pets. That’s all I hope for. I’m serious

when I say this to you. I can tell you story after story. I have to tell you quickly, so you know what a nut I am. Checking out of the supermarket, when people say to me, total strangers, how are you, I have one answer. "I'm depressed, out of my medication, and my therapist is away so I can't renew my prescription." What it does is open up conversations with three-quarters of the people who say, "I know how you feel," and they tell you intimate details of their life, even though they have no idea who you are.

This lovely teenager said, "I know how you feel." I said, "What's happening in your life?" She said, "I have a spiritual boyfriend who is very upset with me for smoking." My message is not don't smoke. It's love yourself. I said, "You're a beautiful young thing, a child of God, why would you do that?" She said, "I'm not pregnant. If I were pregnant I wouldn't smoke." I said, "I have a question for you. Your dog walks in the door smoking, what do you say?" She said, "We have two dogs at home, so my mother and I smoke outdoors. We don't expose them to the smoke." Not only that, and I don't have time for more details, but you can hear more stories from veterinarians about miraculous healing, because you go home and you take your dog who is dying of malignant melanoma home, because the kids say you don't euthanize your patients, you don't euthanize our dog Oscar. And Oscar lived for two and a half years because I loved him. The kids taught me a hell of a lot about what I was preaching. Veterinarians, as I said, can tell you a lot more stories.

Medical education is a problem. It's about the experience. It's about the diagnosis. But it's slowly changing, and I see this at medical schools. You have to let physicians know what you're experiencing, and use metaphors. I simply say this to all of you. When you come down with an affliction, always say to yourself, "If I had to describe what I'm experiencing to someone else, what words would I use?" Then ask yourself, "How do those words fit my life?" When

you have a terrible migraine headache and say it's a weight, as a lady did the other day, her husband is the weight and the burden. Get that relationship straightened out and I'm sure you'll have a lot fewer headaches. Cancer can be a failure, not of your body, but the fact that your parents committed suicide when you were a kid, so you're a failure as a child.

I think we need to get involved in the awe and mystery of the human body. I literally wish we would spend money going in here, not out there. We are incredible. Think about it. You're sitting here. Everybody in this room came from one cell. Where the hell does DNA get its intelligence from? The other thing about DNA that blows my mind – you read basic science. We're all bacteria, all right, picture that. Guess what those people come up with – antibiotics. So we have a meeting, and we say, "What do we do now? They're trying to kill us." Your DNA knows what to do, and we get upset because bacteria become resistant to antibiotics. How did they get so smart? It's very simple. When life is stable, your DNA does a nice job, repeats itself millions and billions of times, with a rare mistake. Then you're threatened. DNA says, "We're threatened, let's try a few changes." That's how you survive. So don't get mad at bacteria. God doesn't play favorites. We have the same capabilities. Maybe if you could do what the bacteria did, you could cure your disease. To me it's the potential, and that we have no idea yet what the human body is capable of in terms of its own inner intelligence.

The other is my simple way of telling you, in terms of proof of creation. What's fascinating to me are the numbers 0 and 1. Our whole world rests on those numbers. The entire computer system is based on them. Everything in this room, and creation, came from nothing, which has potential. Think of yourselves always as a blank screen. What you're capable of producing and doing. And it produces the 1.

Is it an accident that we have 10 fingers and 10 toes? Why hasn't evolution changed that and helped us out, so our shoes fit better and we can carry more things home from the supermarket? Why is that beautiful woman a 10? Why is a perfect test score 100? Why did God give us 10 suggestions? In Biblical stories, because the 10, and I can't get into the 4, 3, 2, 1, but it equals 10, and we're talking about our wholeness. To me, and to Carl Jung, the secret is in numbers. So remember those. The quantum physicists will also tell you that desire and intention alter matter. They don't have a problem with saying a sentence like that. We do, and some of that relates again to guilt. If I'm not determined enough, I don't have enough desire, I didn't make myself well. As I said, the issue is not dying, it's working at living. The byproduct may be not dying.

The other thing from the spiritual perspective that I always feel – just to get the point across – I was handed a set of car keys because somebody here lost their car keys. I forgot to hold them up. My thought now is, “How do I know? Maybe God wants somebody to walk home.” So I'll keep them. If that is humorous to you, remember, when you lose your health, go look for it, because if you're going to look for your car keys, look for your health.

It's not an issue of God taking something from you, or punishing you. I grew up with parents who loved me and taught me, and a nice God whom I talked to all the time. Guilt, shame and blame were not a part of it. If you react with guilt, ask yourself, “Where did this start? Where did it come from?” When two people read the same book, one says, “You inspired me,” the other says, “I feel guilty.” It isn't the book. It's what they see in it because of their upbringing.

I feel as a physician that I'm a coach. I'm a director. When you take an actor and an actress and you put them on a stage, and you give them a role to play, the neuropeptides in their

immune system are altered by the role they are playing. If I can coach you, and you've got the inspiration within you, then we're going to achieve some things. If you don't have it in you, then I don't know what I can bring to you.

We know there is body memory. This I know from personal experience too, and I won't go into that. We'll hear more and more stories, because it's safer to talk about body memory in the sense of what lives in us and what is living in transplanted organs. So you capture a murderer based on a heart transplant from a murdered child into another. You take a heart from somebody with cystic fibrosis and put it in another man. The two guys are now alive, and it's amazing when he starts calling his wife by the other guy's wife's name, and you can bring them together. Why do I think that's important to you? Because if you have a body memory and there are painful episodes in your past, work at healing them, and your body can be healed at the same time.

The other thing that continues to fascinate me is what I call psychological genetics. A study done in Denmark showed that if the parents who adopted you died before 50 of cancer, you were more likely to get it. It didn't matter what your biological parents did. At the end of the article that was published a few years ago in *The New England Journal of Medicine* it said it must be a carcinogen in the kitchen. If you've been to Denmark, if it's in my kitchen it's in your kitchen. That's a very tiny country. I'd say remember that. What we experience, what goes on, there are psychological genetics too.

The other thing that I love in terms of science – women with the same cancers as men live longer. They do say things like, "I can't die until you're all married and out of the house." But I don't want you to just live a role, because when your kids leave home I don't want you to

lie down and die as a woman did 23 years later when nine kids did leave home. You should be a human being, and live a life, not a role.

The men die because they can't work. "What's the point of living?"

"Well, your wife and children are sitting in the room. Maybe that's a point."

"Oh, I didn't notice them."

The part that I get a kick out of, though, is reading in an oncology journal that women live longer than men with the same stage melanoma, and therefore estrogen and progesterone must be beneficial. Married men live longer than single men with the same cancer. Married men can smoke as much as a single man and not have as much lung cancer. I just want to tell this to all the men. Sleeping with estrogen and progesterone is obviously protective, and you should do that.

If you're trying to find a good doctor, somebody brought this up the other day, there are a lot of ways of becoming what I call "the character" so that you're seen as a human being, not a disease entity. Ask your doctor, "Do you get criticized regularly?" If the answer is yes, say, "Okay, then you're my doctor." Why do I say that? I learned it the hard way. I got a lot of criticism from a lot of patients, from my family, from the nurses, and I thought I must be doing a lousy job. Everybody's always telling me what I'm doing wrong. They said, "No, no, we know you care. We're just trying to make you a better person. You listen to our criticism." If someone is never criticized it is highly unlikely they're perfect. It is more likely that they are so rigid that they're unwilling to change. Therefore people give up criticizing them.

One other thing – notice the name tags. There's a lot that goes on at a spiritual level that isn't thought about. Why do the speakers get purple? Why does the staff get blue? The press got green. Volunteers got red. How did they decide that? We're talking about spirituality.

We're talking about peace and health and blue. Red is energy and passion, wanting to do things. So don't forget this unconscious level.

Carl Jung seventy years ago interpreted a dream, made a physical diagnosis. I just spoke at a medical school graduation in Houston. 200 students. I said, "Any of you ever hear that in four years of medical school?" Raise your hand. No hands go up. I said, "Okay, refuse your diplomas." That's sad and sick that we don't share that information. I was mad as hell at my medical education. When I started doing all of this, I sent articles to medical journals. Medical journals are rigid information. There are a lot of doctors who are ignorant because they don't get the information. So I sent my articles. They came back to me saying it's interesting, but inappropriate. I sent in an appropriate one and it came back again saying it's appropriate but it isn't interesting. This is common knowledge. Let me show you some of the slides.

Don't walk around with a big smile on your face when you've got difficulties and troubles. Don't hide who you really are. This lady folded the page, because inside is this headless, handless person. Next. What I call psychological genetics – a mother and a daughter years apart developed cancer, drew these pictures, and look how alike they are. Just looking at therapy, chemotherapy, you see the difference. Next. Radiation therapy. Next. An operating room. Next. A bone marrow transplant with God and the doctor touching you. Next. A Quaker, see this is the language of medicine, who carries his cancer cells away because he doesn't kill anything. Next. A young lady who says "I hate you" about doctors because they have made her bald, ugly and horrible. Remember life is a labor pain. You choose what you go through. Next.

The body itself, a woman with a breast problem. Next. A young man who had a circumcision. This is uncircumcised. Next. And that's circumcised. Next. Our life is stored in

us. How do I know this about a reporter? The hand on the clock points to 12. Ask her what she had happen at age 12. Next. Or a medical student with a star with nine points. Ask what happened when she was nine years old. Next. A young woman who called me to see if I would give Kevorkian's number to her. Next. The dots on her face she said were the times she was beaten, raped and abused, and she deserves to have a brain tumor and die. She's alive and well today because somebody said, "I love you."

Next. What bothers me about the medical profession, from *The New England Journal of Medicine*, say I'm depressed, I can't cope, you've got to help me, and you get an antidepressant. We need to talk, we need to listen, we need to hear our stories. Next. Because what do you do for a quadriplegic? Next. What antidepressant? Next. Or, my friend Max who is living here now as United States Senator from Georgia. You can't replace his arms and legs which were blown off. Next. Or Sue Ann who had cancer and cerebral palsy and is sitting gagged and tied so she can type her autobiography with her nose. That's courage. That's life. Next.

Again, what we're taught in medical schools is to think. When you ask doctors, "How do you feel?" they say "I think." Even in these famous paintings, what is the doctor doing when somebody's dying? Next. Thinking. What's the doctor doing? Thinking. Next. This is a guy I'm sure you would be afraid to have operate on you, but it happens to be the man who's up here speaking to you. That's what our training does to us. This was painted over 20 years ago as a self-portrait. I was a sick man. Almost every physician has post-traumatic stress disorder, and it needs to be dealt with. You can't bury this. It will kill you. Next. So ask your doctor to put his or her desk against the wall so there's nothing between you and them, or get to the office early and take their seat. Next. If they aren't happy, tell them to do what I did. You get a job at

Subway. You still relate to people, you help people, and you get a knife, gloves and a uniform.

Next. That's a true story.

Again, just in a general way, the states in black are the ones with the highest incidence of chronic disease. Yes, there are toxins, but there's also Nevada surrounded by states where they have the lowest incidence. So remember about family, relationships, and love. If you say your parents love you while you're in college, only 28% had a major illness 35 years later. If you said no, they didn't love me, 95% had a major illness. Next. This is just about nature. Plants grow through the pavement. Next. Trees grow through fences. They don't know about problems. Their DNA gets smart. Next. So when you run into those same things, get your baby pictures out and deal with the love and the self-esteem and the self-worth. Next. Remember, life is a series of beginnings. All you have to do is ask, "What is the butterfly of my life?" When you run into difficulties, break out of your cocoon. Next. God loves you just the way you are. I won't take the time to tell you a story about that cup. Next. There's one thing I did teach God, though, and God thought I came up with a good point. Originally the leaves in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine were changing in order to help the economy of those states by getting tourists to come. I pointed out to God the metaphor and the symbolism, that before you let go of the tree of life, get rid of the green. Don't just be another green leaf. Show your beauty and your uniqueness. Thank you.