

The Irresistible Resolve to Control

Life with Cancer

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I feel one coming on, oh heck I feel a lot coming on. Oh no, I don't want to do it but I can't control the temptation. Yikes, here they come..... my New Year's Resolutions.

Ok, here goes. I resolve to grow my hair back in a month, my eyebrows in a week. I resolve to banish cancer from my body forever, and stop my husband nagging me. Oh hang on, but I have no control over any of those things, especially the last one! Umm. What on earth am I going to do?



Seems silly doesn't it to try and control that which we have no power over, like our own health, but it's often a reflex reaction when you're diagnosed with cancer. You feel there must be some way that you can solve this. But at some point you realize that life is going to take you where it wants, regardless. Sometimes, the fact that we have no control over the big things in our life, transforms into a need to find things we can control – all the petty stuff: like which way up wine glasses are put in a cupboard; or how the dishwasher is loaded. But at the end of the day, do you really want to be putting all your energy into controlling stuff that, in the big scale of things, doesn't really matter?

It's not unusual for survivors, or their loved ones, to fall into the 'sweat the small stuff' trap, because when you can't control whether you're going to live or die, lose or hold your loved forever, it's easy to channel your focus into the petty, the inconsequential, the 'nagfest'. We forget that there are plenty of meaningful ways to take back control instead.

So, my resolution this year? Well, to just go back to the old standards I guess, like eating right, getting fit and losing some weight. My resolutions don't usually last very long, but this year I had a brain wave. Doing all these things is going to give me the best chance of keeping my cancer away. Making sure that I'm as healthy as can be, and my immune system is fighting fit, will help my own body keep any abnormal cells in check. Huh! So maybe I do have some control after all.

What I've realized is, that I must accept the things that I can't change, like the way the dishwasher's been stacked for the last 20 years, and instead have the courage to change the things I know I can. But the true key to control, is having the wisdom to know the difference. I can control my attitude. I can manage how I look after my own body, and I definitely have power over the way I treat other people. So I have the resolve to control this New Year, but now I'm channeling it in the right direction.

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