

A BOOK REVIEW OF RADICAL REMISSION

Written by David G. Schwartz, M.D.

Kelly Turner, working as a counselor to cancer patients in a large cancer research hospital in San Francisco, was reading Dr. Andrew Weil's book, Spontaneous Healing and came across a case of remission of advanced cancer without the use of conventional medicine. Intrigued by that, she tried to find other cases of what she called Radical Remission and was shocked to find more than 1000 cases published in medical journals, all of which received no attention at the cancer center where she worked. The more she searched, the more frustrated she became because no one was seriously investigating these cases or even trying to track them. Most of the cancer survivors she interviewed said their doctors showed no interest in hearing about what they had done to get better. Most outrageous was that some of the doctors actually asked the survivors not to tell any of the other patients in the waiting room about their recoveries, so as not to give them "false hope."

Turner decided to go for a Ph.D. to explore this phenomenon. She chose twenty people for her dissertation, but since her Ph.D. degree, she has conducted over 100 interviews and has analyzed over 1000 cases of Radical Remission. The doctors reporting the cases carefully listed all the biochemical changes experienced by the patients, but none of the authors reported directly asking the survivors why they thought they had healed. The patients also sought out a variety of alternative healers all over the globe, but the research ignored these healers, and no one had studied how these healers treat cancer. Dr. Turner spent 10 months traveling all over the world in 10 countries, interviewing 50 alternative healers.

Dr. Turner found 75 factors among these 1000+ cases she studied, but 9 of them kept recurring in almost every interview. These 9 are:

1. Radically changing the diet
2. Taking charge of one's health
3. Following one's own intuition
4. Taking herbs and supplements
5. Releasing suppressed emotions
6. Increasing positive emotions
7. Embracing social support
8. Deepening spiritual connections
9. Having strong reasons for living

Dr. Turner makes it clear that it is not her intention to raise false hopes, because the 9 characteristics are only hypothesis, not proven facts.

The author devotes 9 chapters to these key factors, discussing the rationale and the research behind each of them, and illustrating each with the story of a survivor that is a most striking example of that particular factor. She gives action steps at the end of each chapter to develop the habits, attitudes, and practices needed for that particular theme.

A majority of the survivors made the same 4 dietary changes:

1. Greatly reducing or eliminating sugar, meat, dairy, and refined foods
2. Greatly increasing vegetable and fruit intake
3. Eating organic foods
4. Drinking filtered water

The Radical Remission survivors took charge of their health, played an active role in their treatments and healing, having a sense of being in control of the treatments, decisions, and lifestyle changes. Many worked at their healing with time-consuming efforts requiring re-prioritizing their activities, work, and lifestyle choices. There was no room for passivity. Taking control means dealing with the resistance that the medical profession, friends and family may put up against the sick person's decisions. This may require a lot of determination. Janice said, "When I was in the hospital, the doctors and nurses spent two hours a day for 2 months trying to convince me that I was going to die, that there was not hope, that I had to accept this. I told them I did not accept it... And I do believe my level of control positively affected my healing... If I had not had the strong intuitive feeling that I would live, and if perhaps I weren't a bit of a rebel by temperament, I would have listened to them and wouldn't be here now to tell my story."

The survivors listened to their own gut feelings, intuitions, deep inner senses, and inner guidance about what course to follow with their treatments, lifestyle, or work. They learned methods for tuning in to their intuition. Sometimes their decisions defied logic or just were not based on any logical analysis of their situation, but they had a strong certainty that their choices were the right ones for them.

The survivors took herbs and supplements to detoxify the body, to strengthen the immune system, and to support the digestive system, among other effects that generally strengthen the whole body, usually selecting which supplements were most applicable to each individual.

Releasing suppressed emotions is no simple matter. That required major personal work, whether it was counseling, journaling, stress management work, meditation, and/or whatever methods worked best for each person to detoxify the mind-body from anger, fear, and depression. The chapter begins with a quote from Mark Twain: "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured."

Survivors learned to express gratitude, love, playfulness, and laughter, and they did specific disciplines and daily practices to cultivate positive emotions. In contrast to commonly used visualizations of doing battle with the cancer, they practiced sending love to all parts of the body, including the cancer, recognizing that the cancer was not an outside invader but a product of one's own body. By loving it, they gave the cancer permission to calm down, shrink, and go away.

One survivor, Saranne, 29 years old, in tears, terrified and feeling overwhelmed at hearing her diagnosis of metastatic stage 4 breast cancer, decided to switch from trauma to laughter. She asked her daughter to help her make a list of all the things that made them laugh, then made a commitment to take a minute twice a day to really have fun, and the more they practiced the more it permeated their whole days. People who knew that her body was currently in terrible shape would remark, “You and your daughter are so happy. Look at you guys... You dance through life together... What is your secret? How are you doing this?”

The radical remission survivors asked for and received help and support from friends and family, joined support groups, and learned to benefit from human to human contact. The author recommends that if you are the loved one of a cancer patient, to call them and simply tell them you are thinking about them, even if you don't have time to run errands for them or pamper them or drop off healthy meals (all of which would be nice), just a phone call or email every couple of days to send your love goes a long way.

The survivors deepened their spiritual experiences with more frequent and regular spiritual practices. This is not about specific religious beliefs or doctrines, and regardless of which religious path the patient chose, it was the experience of deeply felt spiritual reality. One survivor, Matthew, had an inoperable malignant brain tumor in the center of his brain with a 2% chance of surviving more than a few months even with conventional treatments. He went to Brazil to see “John of God,” Joao Teixeira de Fariqa, a healer who does not charge for his services. Matthew did not undergo the commonly known “psychic surgery” from John, who recommended instead herbs, supplements, and meditation. Matthew meditated in John of God's special meditation room 6 hours per day, 3 days a week, for 2 years, and little by little, the tumor shrank to nothing by the end of that time. Matthew stayed on for 2 more years at the healing center volunteering and helping others. He is still enjoying excellent health as of 2014.

Each of the survivors exhibited strong reasons for living, that is, a purpose for being present here on this planet, and experiencing being alive. This is different from not wanting to die or fearing death. They felt a strong sense that they have to be here. As Donna, a grandmother with stage 3 colon cancer said regarding (what if I die?) ‘Don't even go there. I need to take charge of this. I need to do what I have to do here. I'm not going anywhere...I'm not done!’ Now at age 67 she anticipates living to age 88.

As the author stated, these 9 principles are only hypotheses, not proven fact, but from my perspective, these case studies are so phenomenal that they constitute valid scientific inquiry.

What conclusions can be drawn from a perspective of science? There may have been many people about whom we have no reports, who did all these 9 things and did not survive the cancer. Even so, their lives would have certainly been transformed into a much more vibrant and happy existence. Anyone with any chronic disease could benefit tremendously by practicing these 9 qualities, as well as people who already are healthy.

The converse conclusion may be drawn, that if someone has cancer or any other life-threatening condition, the probability of success is likely to be very low without relying on conventional drugs, surgery, and radiation, if they do not practice any of these 9 characteristics. These qualities do require a tremendous commitment and considerable time and effort. The possibility of overall success may be even higher for more people by integrating these methods with some conventional treatments.

The only correction I would recommend is in the language the author uses for the immune system. She speaks often of these methods “boosting” the immune system. A better term would be “strengthening” or “balancing” the immune system. The immune system can be overly active in some aspects, and at the same time, deficient in other ways. There are many aspects of our modern lifestyle that over-stimulate the immune system and cause inflammation. Most of our modern chronic diseases are mediated by inflammation. Cancer thrives on inflammation and actually hijacks the immune system to produce more inflammation. At the same time it uses “cloaking devices” to hide, so the immune system can’t recognize it. The goal for healing is to balance the immune system so it can see and remove the cancer without being over-stimulated. I would describe the methods these survivors used as strengthening and balancing their immune systems.

People can submit more cases of radical remission or search for more cases by going to www.radicalremission.com.

Reading the inspiring stories of these 9 radical remission survivors is enough to get the picture, but the research the author presents supporting what happened with them is eye-opening, and the action steps to develop these 9 qualities are practical and valuable. This book is phenomenal and should be a best seller.