

Hypnosis for Cancer Care

By Roger Moore, CHt

Cancer impacts so many more people than the patient, and loved ones often need help to process and deal with their new situation. My office is a safe place for couples to talk through role changes caused by cancer and at times, the impending death of one of the partners. And, it's a place to grieve the loss of body parts and functions. There *is* life after cancer, and it can be made easier with support and tools like self-hypnosis. Here is an example.

A few years ago, I received a phone call from an oncologist at a cancer center. He had an emergency situation with a male patient and really wanted me to meet with the man that afternoon. His patient—we'll call him David—had an aggressive form of cancer and had completed chemo. The chemo hadn't worked and his doctor wanted him to try radiation. Because of the chemotherapy, David had nearly died three times and had broken ribs resulting from the resuscitation.

David's appointment that day was to get the tattoos for radiation. He was in extreme pain, couldn't lay down and was also claustrophobic. The oncologist wanted hypnosis for him to help him relax, overcome the pain and feel comfortable being confined for the procedure.

When I arrived, I found David in a room by himself looking at a picture of a young girl on his phone. He told me he had changed his mind and wasn't going to go through with radiation. He believed the chances for his survival—with or without the treatment—were not good, and he had lost all hope.

I asked him about the girl in the photo. He lit up. It was his 4-year-old granddaughter that he and his wife had provided daycare for since birth. I asked David about his hopes for her, and he just bubbled over with love and joy.

Clinging to his hopes for his granddaughter, he chose to go ahead with the tattoo. Using hypnosis, I helped him to lie down on the table and then talked with him over the microphone from the booth. When the marking was completed, I was at his side and talked with him as he sat up with minimal discomfort. Over the next few weeks I was in the booth guiding David with hypnosis as he received his radiation treatment.

Today, David is alive and cancer-free. He makes a point to call me each December to wish me a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

People with cancer, both those receiving treatment and survivors, often experience significant problems with pain, fatigue, sleep, stress, anxiety, trauma and grief associated both with the cancer diagnosis and side effects of the treatments. After cancer, life is often profoundly different, and hypnosis can be powerfully effective for the physical, mental and emotional fallout. The efficacy of hypnosis for cancer recovery is well documented, and I'd be happy to discuss hypnosis could help with this or any other health concern you have.

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