



David Caldwell
Prostate Cancer

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in September of 1999. At the time, I didn't know any men who had survived prostate cancer. My reaction to the news was a sentence of death, until I met the surgeon who consented to do my surgery. He treated my diagnosis as a bump in the road that needed addressed so I could continue on with the rest of my life.

My experience with cancer has been positive, except for the week just after the diagnosis when I shed a lot of tears. Michael O. Koch, M.D., Professor and Head of Urology at the IU School of Medicine, and a study by the IU School of Nursing were both very instrumental in helping me realize I would become a cancer survivor.

Cancer doesn't automatically mean a terminal diagnosis. You must be vigilant in seeking help from others and taking care of yourself. Taking care of yourself means being screened on a regular basis, being aware of unusual symptoms, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Seek the best expertise you can find in the area of treatment you need. Don't be reluctant to seek a second opinion. As one of my nurses said to me, 'It's your body and you need to take care of it and be responsible to do what makes your life as good as it can be.'

Cancer has increased my awareness of the great possibilities life has to offer and made me much more aware of the things that I am capable of doing. It has also made me intolerant of petty arguments and differences that seem to make so many people thrive.

I now volunteer to help other people and I am much more aware of the needs of others. I also do things like running marathons to show others that cancer is survivable if you are aggressive in taking care of yourself.