

The Top Three Things You Need to Know When You're Single and Diagnosed with Cancer

1. YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

There is nothing like a time of either great celebration or great challenge to make us feel really alone. Those are the times in our lives when we long to share the experience with someone. When our team wins a championship, it is more fun when we are in the middle of a rowdy group of cheering fans. It is no different when you are diagnosed with a serious health issue, experience the loss of a loved one or face any other personal crisis in your life. That is when you want comfort, support and someone to tell you that you're not alone. For those with families and partners, that comforting presence is sometimes all it takes to feel ok. They don't always even have to share how they are feeling out loud to feel supported and loved. But if you live alone and don't have someone right there, it takes something to reach out and ask for help. It requires vulnerability and a tremendous amount of authenticity to let others know we are struggling and need their help. For some of us, that can seem impossible. The first chapter of my [book](#) walks you through this process step by step from taking stock of the people in your life, to how to ask for help, and how to figure out what you need in the first place.

2. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE

You are 100% responsible for your life, but don't misread that to mean that it's your "fault" that you got sick or lost your job or someone rear-ended you. It may seem subtle, but there is a distinction between what happens to you and how you choose to see it and respond to it. I love what Christiane Northrup says about it: "You are responsible TO your illness, not FOR your illness." The good news is that when we take full responsibility for our lives then we have the power to change. When others or circumstances are to blame, there is not much we can do about that. Taking responsibility is mandatory when you are facing a diagnosis. It is tempting to rely upon doctors to tell you what to do and make you better, but that isn't the way it works. It is up to you to choose a good team to surround you including: doctors, therapists, coaches, friends and family, other practitioners, etc. They will all want to give you advice or share resources, and you should listen to all of them thoroughly. Then it is up to you to decide what is best for you. No one else can do that. Ceding responsibility for your most valuable asset – yourself – to anyone else is not a good idea.

3. YOU ARE LOVABLE AND LOVED

*At the heart of personality is the need to feel a sense of being lovable
without having to qualify for that acceptance. --Paul Tournier*

If we don't feel lovable, we can't really allow anyone else love us. I surveyed 100 single cancer survivors about a wide variety of topics and found the following, perhaps unsurprising statistics:

85% said they felt anxiety or inadequacy about dating.

83% percent said body image issues were a major concern.

It would be easy to think that being sick somehow makes us unlovable (even if we aren't single), but the truth is that the right person will love you no matter what. Believing that begins with knowing for sure that you are lovable. Some single survivors reported that their cancer experience actually made them more desirable as potential partners admired their strength and were inspired by them. When we believe we are lovable, we are more willing to ask for what we need in terms of affection and support, and when we ask, we are more likely to actually get what we need.

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