

THE GOOD FIGHT: MY BATTLE WITH PANCREATIC CANCER AND ADVOCACY FOR A CURE

A blog by Carrie Ng Grace for Pancreatic Cancer Canada

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A Cancer Survivor's Story

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Happy Times

Unfortunately, it appears that things have taken a turn for the worst right now with my health. I planned to finish my last semester of law school in December, but things spiralled out of control very suddenly and I had to rush home to be taken care of by my family. I am too weak to tolerate any more chemo treatments and have basically been told I'm on my deathbed. But I still say fuck that – nobody is going to tell me when to die. This is just a rough patch along the way. This is why there have been no blog posts since September. I refuse to give up.

At this point, I have set aside pursuing my law degree because I believe in the grand scheme of things – it never really meant as much as the experience along the way and all it taught me about myself as a person. Tons of people are lawyers – some of them special, some of them not. I do not define myself by my career path alone – I am so much more as a human being ,and was meant to be so much more than this **(yes I have a big ego)**.

Through my journey, there is so much to be thankful for – but it is mostly the people who have constantly been supporting me and cheering me on, sending me positive energy. First: my amazing family – my mom, older brother, aunts, cousins, family friends, friends from childhood, high school, university, law school, access and equity manager at law school, teachers, and professors, employers, Canadian Cancer Society volunteers, nurses etc. They have constantly given me hope and never faltered in their faith for me.

Also, my amazing team of chemo doctors and my palliative care doctor have been in my corner all along with world class healthcare for the treatment of pancreatic cancer. I could not have asked for anything more.

The Ladies at the Pancreatic Cancer Canada Foundation have supported me personally through this experience.

My naturopath has been amazing and treated me with alternative therapies, including dealing with spiritual, mental, and emotional issues, and changing my lifestyle and diet.

Even new friends have become close friends right away.

I have taken trips this summer to Vegas and Montreal with close girlfriends, as well as completed an internship for my law degree with the Children's Aid Society in Child Protection, which was an amazing practical experience for me. I learned so much just observing court

22nd

October 2011

17 Comments

proceedings in a single day than I would probably than in an entire month in law school. It really opened up my eyes to realize how fortunate I've been and taken for granted that I come from an amazing family/support system and there is an entire world out there I could have never imagined where children and families go through intense and complicated struggles.

I have led a charmed life. I really have. I've been spoiled and surrounded by love and happiness. But I do not take anything for granted.

I hope that by writing this, I can help others going through similar journeys in some small way.

posted by Admin
Tags: Inspiration, Love, The Fight
Filed under: Advocacy, Reflections, The Good Fight

Living Between Two Worlds

For nearly 8 years now I've lived between two worlds. I've gone to school in one city for 8 months and then spend my summers at home. Since I started law school I've also tended to travel home more to visit for doctor's appointments and scans due to the nature of my cancer progressing.

Although I should be used to it by now, it still catches me off guard every time I make a move from one place to the other. The last month I was home (August), I couldn't wait to get back to school. I was actually excited to head back and I was counting the days down till I could move away from home and be on my own again. I looked forward to freedom, independence, and the chance to finish off my degree. As much as I loved being at home, I had been there since April and I felt ready to be on my own again. Things were going relatively well with my treatments with the only real problematic side effects being my low hemoglobin (red blood cell) counts – which make me very tired and weak and make my skin extra-sensitive/dry. But compared to where I was at last winter when I was missing half of my classes, I am doing so much better now. I was excited to return to school and to see my friends in this city again.

But now that I'm back, I am reminded of all the things I hate about this city and I miss home. First, going to school with Type-A, narcissistic, socially-incompetent law students is exhausting. Sitting in a classroom with them for 15 minutes makes me want to shoot myself in the face. Their pretentious comments, stupid questions, and fake laughter are just too much to handle.

Also, living on a major street close to campus means that undergrad students are seething everywhere like cockroaches being loud and obnoxious/partying both in my building and on the street. I picked up some earplugs today.

The food here is soooooo expensive and there is very little selection/variety (I could not even find a cantaloupe to buy and I live within 5 minutes of TWO major grocery stores; plus the fresh fruit market that I was SO looking forward to taking advantage of this year, closed down) – also because those cockroach undergrads buy everything up and take up the aisles of the grocery store with their huge carts, telling their boy story drama to their friends, while coughing into their hands instead of their elbows with the nasty cold/flu going around this city. DISGUSTING.

Speaking of disgusting, everybody in this city smokes. So as I'm walking down the street, I'm constantly getting cigarette smoke blown in my face. This is great for my cancer probably. It doesn't make sense for me to speed up and pass them because the next person in front of them is smoking too. Maybe I should also invest in a mask/air filter.

And by far the thing that irritates me most is that people here don't know how to walk or get out of the way. There is absolutely no common courtesy. People don't hold doors for each other. ***Walk on the right and pass on the left?*** — Totally foreign concept in this land. People will walk in rows of 3 or 4 towards you and don't have the sense to get out of the way or step aside into a line so you can squeeze by. Instead you are expected to walk around *them*. Last year I ran through a few people when I just got fed up with it. One girl I ran through dropped her coffee and looked at me in awe. *Idiot*. Maybe I will start doing that again.

So why did I fight so hard to get back here again? I came here for the program/ curriculum that the law school in this city offers. Not that many law schools in Ontario place as large an emphasis on social justice as mine. And we have some amazing professors on our faculty. I like the academic program and the class material/content and opportunities they offer for internships and practical placements like working at different legal clinics.

Also, my school has been amazing in terms of accommodating my health situation. There is an Access and Equity manager who has been following me all along and knows about my diagnosis of cancer and all the treatments that I've been going through. Support services and accommodations have been made for me as a result like I can get notes from a note-taker for classes I miss due to appointments or if I'm feeling unwell. I've also had exams deferred or moved around depending on when I have my chemo treatments. Most schools (esp. law schools), would not go to such great lengths to accommodate their students. It is because of these supports that I've been able to continue to pursue my law degree through all of my treatments. So I'm very thankful for that.

Other things that I do like about being back here: I'm forced to walk a lot more instead of drive since I don't have a car. This means more exercise for me, which is probably what I need at this point. I used to run a lot but right now with my low hemoglobin I don't think I'd be able to because my counts are so low – I get tired and short of breath really easily – even just walking. So walking is a good place to start. And there's also a yoga studio here I've been going to for years and I'm back doing that again, which really calms and grounds me.

Also, I've made some really great friends here that I'm really glad to be close to again. I missed seeing them when I was home so it's kinda cool that we're back in the same city now and we can hang out. I'm thankful for this time I have with them because I know it will be short-lived since I'm only here until December.

I'm headed home next weekend for a CT scan to check on the progress of the treatments. It will only be for a few days but I am really looking forward to it already. It will be nice to see my family, to have dinner with other people around, to be able to sleep in my own bed... it will be short and sweet. But I'll be back again in two weeks for Thanksgiving as well. So there will be some reprieve from this awful city lacking in life, vigour, culture, style, and basic civilization.

19th
September 2011
1 Comment

It's really not so bad and I shouldn't be complaining especially because this is what I wanted so badly all along. And I do still want it. I just forgot how much this city sucks.

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: home, school
Filed under: Reflections

Time to Change the Way we Live!: Study confirms what I've been saying... "Healthier Living could cut millions of cancer cases a year"

A few months back, I wrote a post entitled "We Must Change" (originally posted May 10, 2011) about the importance of changing our lifestyles and the way we run this world ... Since it got lost in the website redux, I will re-post this post. I am raising the issue again because a "legitimate research" study (meaning someone who actually invested money into asserting a worldview), was done supporting my arguments. Please see below for my

MY ORIGINAL POST:

We Must Change – May 10, 2011

A couple weeks ago as I sat in chemo with a fever and chills running down my spine, I came to an epiphany. I was struck by the sight of rows and rows of people of all different walks and stages of their lives, in chairs or on beds, hooked up to dripping IV bags. Machines ding-ed, nurses scrambled about, doctors popped in occasionally, as friends and family members sat attentively by their loved ones sides. People still smiled and cracked jokes. I could tell they were still human. But my realization was tragic.

This is not life. It can't be. This is *not* how things should be. How did we get to this treacherous place?

The scene felt worse to me than any novel or film dystopia I had ever experienced. That's because this was reality. Not some imaginary nightmare or story. ***This is ACTUALLY the world we live in.***

So many people are affected by illness, and particularly cancer these days. If not ourselves, it is a family member, friend, colleague... and we only hear about it more and more. Cancer does not discriminate based on age, colour, gender, class, sexual orientation; it can happen to anyone. And if we do not change the way we live, I suspect one day that it is going to happen to *all* of us.

I'm sure there is obviously a complex interplay of factors, which brought humanity to our current unhealthy state. The way our food is produced, the radiation we are exposed to through different technologies, the pollution we have created, the culture of insatiable consumption we live within, unresolved emotional/mental/spiritual conflicts we refuse to face, etc. We cannot continue to sustain ourselves this way. And even if we could, it is sad that our lives would merely consist of "sustenance" rather than actually living and enjoying life to the fullest.

For patients like myself, chemotherapy is my best option for "survival". But even chemo we know is a temporary solution to a much bigger problem for which there is no cure at the present time. Throughout my experience with this disease, I have always tried to treat my cancer as a chronic condition rather than a terminal one because I have always had hope that a cure would be discovered eventually or I'd be able to heal myself.

But treating cancer as a chronic illness should not be our standard. Enduring chemotherapy regimens for the rest of our lives is not the answer. ***Eliminating cancer's potential to develop altogether in our systems should be the real goal.*** But this can only happen if we as a society change. This means changing our lifestyles (what we eat, where we buy our food, what kind of food we consume, how we prepare it), our mentality towards environmental sustainability (making different choices/taking different approaches to industrialization, urban sprawl, transportation systems) and our culture of overzealous consumption (taking only what we need and sharing more with others). All easier said than done I'm sure.

But if we don't change, nothing will, and the suffering continues. Will you be ok with that?

THE STUDY ARTICLE:
<http://www.healthzone.ca/health/newsfeatures/cancer/article/1051051-healthier-living-could-cut-2-8-million-cancer-cases-a-year?bn=1>

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: chemotherapy, cure, food, lifestyle
Filed under: Education/Statistics, Reflections, The Good Fight

Sending out Prayers and Positive Energy to Mr. Park!

This morning in the [Toronto Star](#), I came across an article entitled "**Son seeks worldwide prayers for cancer-stricken dad**". Mr. Kunsil Park immigrated to Canada many years ago and raised his family here. In 2009 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent treatment to overcome the disease but was recently diagnosed with **pancreatic** cancer as well. His son, Daniel Park, has created a youtube video in an effort to reach out to people all over the world to ask for their prayers and positive energy to heal his father. They are asking for a collective prayer effort on September 9, 2011. You can read the article and watch the video here:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1049128-son-seeks-worldwide-prayers-for-cancer-stricken-dad?bn=1>

Together let's build a community of hope and healing! We can help Mr. Park by sending out our positive energy!!

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: healing, positive energy, prayers
Filed under: Advocacy, The Good Fight

The Return to School

This summer has been incredible. After the rough transition through spring in April-May when I rushed home from school and dropped everything, I have had the best summer probably since childhood when I used to hang out with my grampa everyday – going shopping, lunches at Swiss Chalet (with shirley temples, ice cream, and coffee), watching TV, and spending time with friends in the neighbourhood playing outside.

15th
September 2011
0 Comments

4th
September 2011
0 Comments

30th
August 2011
2 Comments

Don't get my wrong – the start to summer was uncertain and probably one of the scariest/darkest times of my life. I thought I was dying. But with the support of my family, friends, doctors, and a naturopath, I turned my life around and started to get better. For the rest of the summer, I pretty much took it easy – with the exception of the few weeks I studied for my exams and put in my articling applications in July. And I just finished my internship last week but it was quite laid back since I could spread out my hours the way I wanted to and according to my chemo schedule. Having completed the internship also means that I'll only have half a year left to go to finish school!

I'm looking forward to being on my own again – to having my own apartment, being close to many of my friends in a different city – to the student life! I know I am blessed to be able to enjoy this time for just a little while longer since most of my peers/friends have started their articling jobs in these past couple of months but tell me they wish they were going back to school in September! I know it is just a transition period for them; it sort of indicates the official introduction to their adult life where they become completely responsible for themselves. The upside is is that they'll finally start making some money, even if most of that money is going to be paying off student debt or parents who have helped along the way. At least they are starting their "real" lives!!

I have been going to school for a long time now. And although I will be glad to finish, I am really going to cherish this final leg of law school. I have fought so hard to be here and to be able to go back. I took the time away that I needed. Also, since the side effects from this chemo treatment are much more tolerable and I will have my weekends to enjoy rther than having to re-coup or trying to catch up/stay on top of school. My mom won't have to travel back and forth every second week to take care of me. That will free up her time and cause less stress for her as well, so she can take better care of herself and the rest of our family.

I'm looking forward to getting back into shape – walking longer distances, perhaps even getting up to running again, and definitely yoga. There's also a pool/gym around the corner, 2 blocks from my apartment that I plan to use for swimming. Right now I feel pretty weak – especially b/c the chemo suppresses my red blood cell counts, so I'll have to work on getting my strength up and eating properly. It also helps that I live directly across the street from the grocery store and I'm excited to continue on experimenting with my food adventures. Since my naturopath has told me to avoid wheat, dairy, sugar, soy, corn, and non-organic meats, I have been experimenting with new recipes this summer and discovering a whole new world of food and different way to eat.

I'm also thankful to have my appetite back. For a long while through winter/spring I did not want to eat because the nausea and chemo drugs made all of my food taste different (like metal – especially chicken and other meats), so I didn't want to eat. That was such a terrible time, since food is one of my favourite things in life.

I also live quite close to a number of fresh food markets, so I will be spoiled as I can walk to them to get fresh produce and other interesting food items. I look forward to having dinner parties for my friends as I did in the past.

I *will* miss all of my friends who have graduated. A number of them will still be around because they're articling in the same city but it will be different not seeing them at school. I know a few people in the year behind me (the class that I'll be in this year) but not nearly as many as close/comfortably as the class that I entered with. I suppose this is just an opportunity to make new/more friends.

I know the time is going to fly by quickly because of the sheer workload of law school – most days are spent with hours and hours of reading, plus sitting in class. I have to tread carefully and remember not to push myself too far/hard, which I believe is what brought me to my ill health last year in the first place.

The biggest challenge for me will be to maintain a balance between pursuing my goal of completing law school and taking care of myself/enjoying my life. I will have to be very conscious of this but I'm confident that given my experience last year and the time that I've had to reflect upon everything in my life this summer, that I will be able to handle this challenge.

In the weeks leading up to the return to school, I finished up my internship, attended doctor's appointments, had to go to chemo, and now started packing up this week. Last weekend I got to spend some quality time with friends and family. I went to the Ex on Saturday in Toronto and tried all kinds of deep fried delicious food, including a deep fried Mars bar!! On Sunday, we had a BBQ at my cousin's house in Niagara Falls. I'm so sad that summer is ending but I'm also equally excited to begin school again. I'm having bouts of insomnia I'm so excited! I'll be heading back this Friday – it will be here before I know it!! But first I'm going to enjoy the rest of my summer and ride out these next two days to the fullest!!

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: [balance](#), [end of summer](#), [excitement](#), [law school](#)
Filed under: [Reflections](#), [The Good Fight](#)

Orange Crush: Reflections on Jack Layton's Passing

The passing of Jack Layton came as a shock to me earlier this week. It was one of those moments where I will always remember where I was and exactly what I was doing when I received the news (like when Lady Di passed away, or when the twin towers fell on September 11). This time I was watching a trial in North York and at the break, I heard from one of the lawyers who had been talking on the phone with his colleague. He announced it to the rest of the courtroom as he hung up.

We heard earlier this summer that Jack decided to take some time away from politics to look after his health. Shots of him in the media revealed his extremely physically fragile and gaunt state. This should have been an indication of what was to come but Layton remained so positive and certain that he would return to parliament in the fall to "*fight for Canadian families*" that his spirit and confidence made us all believe him. That is why despite all this foreshadowing, the news still came as a shock to Canadians. Just like Layton and his family, we were not prepared or willing to accept his death and the end of his battle with cancer.

24th

August 2011

3 Comments

To be completely honest, Jack Layton has never been my favourite politician. I found that he came across like a used-car salesman in electoral debates. But I was and am in agreement with many of the NDP's values such as social justice/equality/welfare for minorities, women, the LGBTQ community, the poor; and protection of the environment/more sustainable living, and promotion of civic engagement amongst young people. And since he was leader of the party that championed such values, I respected him as a human being. I will also always remember the moment in the last national leaders debate when he threw in the term "*hashtag fail*". It was a clear indicator that Jack was in tune with young, socially-connected, every day Canadians. It made him seem more human and affable than Harper and Ignatieff who appeared stiff, rigid, and simply repeating pre-written campaign lines.

Furthermore, the huge feat the party achieved in winning the official opposition in parliament for the first time in Canadian history can very much be attributed to Layton's leadership, and specifically his strategy to reach out to constituencies in Quebec. Arguably, this marked the peak of his career – and he was only on his way up.

That is why his death is so dually tragic and celebratory. It is tragic because this country has lost a great leader on the brink of enabling change. At the same time, it is an inspirational story for Layton and his family that he could achieve such an amazing feat in his lifetime. In his letter to Canadians, he writes, "*My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.*" Obviously he has chosen to leave a legacy of optimism and power, asking us as Canadians not to view these circumstances as a tragedy. This is truly inspirational.

Many Canadians (especially young Canadians) are worried about our futures now that the opposition's leader is gone. Although there will be an interim leader and search for a new permanent one, they will have big shoes to fill and inevitably be constantly compared to Jack. The party has a lot to figure out with some very young MPs who unexpectedly won their ridings (especially in Quebec).

But perhaps the death of Jack Layton will be a blessing in disguise. Canadians all over are mourning the loss of a leader that championed socially-conscious values. Perhaps with his passing, these values will be amplified and rise to the forefront of public debate in parliament. Maybe this is naive of me to think/hope for/believe in but given the public reaction I've witnessed in Toronto and Ottawa in the past couple of days, it doesn't seem impossible and at least it will get people thinking and talking about what he stood for. Layton's unwavering belief manifested itself in his battle with cancer, in his commitment to his party, in his values, in Canadians, and in the basic decency of human beings. We can all learn from this.

Another aspect of his humility that strikes/moves me was the reasons for his decision not to share what his second type of cancer was. It was revealed that he consciously made the decision not to publicly release what the latest cancer was because should he die, he did not want other families and patients facing the same disease to feel discouraged or hopeless in their own fight. This is truly compassionate, profound, and insightful. I think something that only families and patients facing cancer could really understand and appreciate. Again, Layton was leaving a legacy of hope and optimism for Canadians, rather than despair and fear for the future. How powerful and forward thinking.

As someone dealing with a type of cancer that has been deemed "terminal" (a term which I continue to reject), I take great refuge in his final words. They give me hope and serve as a reminder that everyone's situation is individual/unique and that just because something happens to one patient, doesn't mean that the outcome must be the same for everyone else. I've talked about this before with respect to my father and aunt who were animate believers to the end that they would survive their diseases, and finally accepted that my situation *can* be different.

So thank you Jack Layton for your humility, for your wisdom, for your hope, and for your big heart. I, along with many other Canadians, will work hard to keep your legacy alive. This I promise.

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: Hope, Jack Layton, Legacy, lessons learned, Politics
Filed under: Reflections, The Good Fight

Older Postings and Comments!

Update Nov 11, 2011: We found older blog material and it is located at link on left under BlogRoll.

Jim Miller

posted by Admin
Filed under: The Good Fight

23rd
August 2011
0 Comments

Another Rant: Don't Make my Cancer About You

Recently, a close family friend went a way to a cottage with our other family friend in common. Apparently my friend with the cottage had wanted to invite me too but was afraid to ask because she assumed I would be feeling too unwell from the treatments to endure the three hour drive to the cottage. In the end, my family and I didn't get an invite, I didn't get to enjoy the beauty and relaxation of the great outdoors, and we missed out on spending precious time with loved ones. All because my friend was afraid to step on my toes or make me feel bad. I would have loved to have gone to the cottage and I was well enough to endure a 9-hour drive to Michigan last weekend for a cousin's wedding. So her assumption without asking was just silly.

But actually it really bothers me when people make my disease about their own insecurities/worries. I had a similar encounter with an aunt a few years ago at a Christmas party. She approached me to apologize for not contacting me or my family after my diagnosis, explaining that she did not know how to react or what to say to us.

The truth is that we don't expect anything from anyone more than just to know that you are there, present, and thinking of us going through this journey. Of course I expect my mother to take care of me, for my brother to provide support to both of us, and for our immediate family to help us with little things like drives to appointments, or running errands to the grocery store. But beyond that, we don't expect anything specific in terms of obligations from anyone else. It'd just be nice to have the acknowledgement that hey, I know this situation might be terrible, but we are cheering for you.

22nd
August 2011
2 Comments

The worst thing to find is silence. I'd rather be offended by intrusive questions or potentially offensive comments when I know that they are coming from a place of genuine intention and love. Otherwise, I just feel neglected and alienated. And I feel disappointment that you could be selfish enough to put your own comforts ahead of mine so that you would not have to feel bad about yourself.

When people get sick, do not allow yourself to make the situation about you. Cancer is something that *I* have to deal with. I need all the love and support that I can get. If that is expressed in the form of repetitive questions, awkward comments, and jumbled words/sentences, I'll accept them with open arms. Because at least it means that you care enough about me to reach out, to go beyond your own fear of feeling bad about yourself for potentially offending me. You do not have to treat me like I am going to break at anything you say/do.

I realize that there is no handbook for dealing with cancer. Everyone deals with it differently – from patients to their families, friends, colleagues, acquaintances and communities. I'm not trying to fault anyone for anything that's transpired. I'm sure culture also influences a lot of how people deal with the circumstances. I'm just saying from my personal experience, I'd rather have those who are close to me ask me about it directly rather than being silent altogether or asking/talking to everyone else but me about it. Real friends should be able to communicate openly – no matter how difficult, or awkward the conversation may be. We should never give cancer the power to silence us or hamper our relationships. That would be a real shame.

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: [friendship](#), [honesty](#)
Filed under: [Reflections](#)

I'm BACK!

My blog entries will now appear at this new URL since Pancreatic Cancer Canada re-vamped their website. Hopefully they will be able to transfer all of my old content over as well. But for now, my story continues here!! Please bookmark this new URL: <http://pancancanada.ca/pccblogger/> and spread the word!

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Filed under: [The Good Fight](#)

21st
August 2011
 2 Comments

Learning How to Fail with Grace

So after the 18 articling applications I threw together in a panic in the midst of studying for my exams back in July, I only landed one interview. It was kind of a blow to my ego – I had a chart all drawn out to schedule interviews over three days, but didn't have anything to write in it. *Ouch*. BUT at least I got ONE (so I was not totally crushed), and more importantly, it was for one of my very top choices: the Ministry of the Attorney General's Crown Law Office Criminal Division (CLOC). It was actually my second choice after the Ministry of the Attorney General's Office of the Children's Lawyer, but in hindsight, CLOC would have been an even better opportunity than working at the OCL because I'd get a much broader-based experience. In short, even though I only got one interview, it was one that I was very happy about and confident that would actually lead to an articling position for me.

Academically, criminal and constitutional law have been my favourite subjects. However, they are also areas in which I don't have much practical experience yet. I was hoping that I could get that through this articling position since the CLOC deals with the majority of criminal prosecutions at the Ontario Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada. Because this Crown office only works on appeal cases, it means I would be dealing with/analyzing contentious legal issues, questions of law, and Charter issues, rather than trying to prove facts. To me appeal work seemed like it would be much more interesting, rewarding, and better matched to my personality and skill sets. This would have been my articling dream job.

For legal positions with the government, the interviews are essentially oral exams. They rank you based on a scoring system. An interviewing committee has a list of questions and if you answer correctly according to their checklist, you get the points. This is supposed to ensure that hiring is done through a merit-based process, rather than through nepotism. I suppose that this is fair and it good practice, but it is also kind of a myth because there is still some subjectivity involved. Not every candidate gets asked the exact same questions (there is a bank to choose from), and in this office, there were 2 different committees – one interviewed one half of the candidates and one interviewed the other. I also heard through the grapevine that in this office, one of the hiring committees tended to ask much tougher questions than the other one. Whether or not that is true I can't confirm, and it would probably just be my own subjective assessment anyway. In the end, what I can tell you is that the interview was really hard. I didn't expect it to be how it was even though I had anticipated a lot.

I had prepared quite extensively. I reviewed my criminal law and evidence notes from school. I read through a bunch of Supreme Court cases and gave some thought to how I felt about each one of them and why. I consulted with my friend's father who is a Crown Attorney. I even took out books from the library on extraordinary criminal appeal routes. But in the end, it was a matter of applying myself. I had all the information there – but it was a question of whether I could use it effectively. This is where I fell short. I made one little stupid mistake, but for the last question, I was a little bit lost for what exactly they were asking me altogether (I was given a hypothetical fact pattern but I had a hard time narrowing in on the question/issue).

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 5 Comments

I had walked into the interview feeling very confident and not the least bit nervous. I knew I had prepared myself well and studied hard. And while I knew the process was going to be competitive, I really believed in myself this time. So what if the other candidates were crazy over achieving, straight A students, and the kids of judges? I went to McGill – the best university in Canada, and probably one of the best in the world. I have stared death in the face before and said FUCK YOU when I was told that I wouldn’t have time to finish my undergraduate degree. I have fought tooth and nail to be in law school through on-going chemo (and other) treatments fighting one of the deadliest cancers. I could compete with these people. Plus my naturopath constantly stresses the importance of positive thinking, belief, and visualization in order to make things happen/turn to reality. So I really really believed that I was going to get this. I believed it until the very end (of the interview).

I walked out of the interview feeling deflated. I knew I had screwed up in a few places. But at that time I wasn’t sure how bad I had screwed up. And it would be hard to gauge as well since I couldn’t listen in on/observe any of the other interviews. I still held out some hope though that maybe some of the other candidates did worse than me and by some stroke of God’s grace, I’d still get the position. But 5 o’clock rolled around on call day (the day when the employer offers you the position if you’ve gotten it), and my phone remained silent. 5:15... 5:30... 5:45...

ball starts to rise in my throat ...

burning ears ...

tightness in chest,

and tears, tears, tears come streaming down my face.

I throw a few things around in my room. How is this happening?? How did I not get it?? I curse at God. Everything that my naturopath told me was a croc of shit. I believed right down to my inner core that I was going to get this. I had visualized myself in the role over and over again just like she told me. So how come I still failed?

For the rest of the night I was miserable. And for the next few days I kept obsessing about it. I re-played the interview over and over again in my mind, thinking about all the things I should have said instead. I couldn’t let it go. I hate losing/failing. I remember in middle and high school I used to cry when we lost our basketball games. People might think that it’s just a game – but it’s not... not when you’ve invested your time, hard work, commitment, and heart into it. If you give all that and still don’t win – it is absolutely devastating.

I know I will have opportunities to do other things. I am not panicking at this point for not having secured an articling position a year in advance of when I need to start. That is not the issue. The issue is that this was my dream job, that it was totally within my grasp, and I let it get away. I only have myself to blame for this. I know with time that things will get better, I’ll have a bit more perspective, and that this will have been a learning experience for me. But right now it is still raw, I am still bitter, and I still have the taste of failure in my mouth. It sucks.

posted by Carrie Ng Grace
Tags: failure, job search, lessons learned
Filed under: Reflections

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Welcome to Our Updated Blog
The Good Fight: My Battle with Pancreatic Cancer
- by Carrie Ng Grace



Pancreatic Cancer Canada is sharing the on-going story of a young Canadian pancreatic cancer survivor in order to build a community of support for others facing this harrowing disease and to bring awareness to a cause that desperately needs more advocacy. This blog will also be a communication tool for those of you who are interested in helping us support early detection research for pancreatic cancer.

Excerpts From Carrie Ng Grace’s Initial Blog

They say only the strong survive. I don’t know if that’s really true. My dad died at the age of 53 and he was the strongest person I knew. 2Pac died when he was 25. He was an iconic image of strength for my generation but foretold his own untimely death. In truth, I think luck has more to do with who lives and who doesn’t. I wasn’t supposed to survive beyond 12 months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer but here I am, years later soldiering on. It’s not because I was stronger than either of them, and I know that at any moment, I could die too.

Before his death, Professor Randy Pausch told the US Congressional Committee that “we don’t have advocates for the disease because they don’t live long enough”. The fact that I am still alive despite the odds means that I have a responsibility to fight for a cure for this devastating disease.

This blog will tell my story as it unfolds as well as reflect on the experiences I’ve already been through. I hope that it helps others out there facing cancer realize that they are not alone, that there is hope, and that no matter how bad your situation is – there is a reason to fight. Each morning I wake up, I am like everyone else. I am walking on a tightrope, and I am fighting the good fight.

Come join me.

posted by Admin
Filed under: Uncategorized

17th
August 2011

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