

My world stopped for 6 minutes this morning...



I rode to the shop earlier than usual this morning, so I could walk over to Supercuts to get a haircut. Just as I was heading out the door a phone call comes in. I go back to check who it was from... Kaiser. The shop is the first number they call when they're trying to reach my wife (Karen), and in this case, it would be to discuss the results of her scan yesterday afternoon... the scan that's looking for any evidence her cancer has spread beyond what was removed two weeks ago.

Knowing that Kaiser's next call would be to my wife's cell, I try to call my daughter (Becky) who would still be at home. No answer. All the stuff going through your mind... what is the news, what changes might be in store for me, how much more "stuff" can the family take. You've prayed for good news but y'know, it's cancer. 3rd time. Her sister, her mom, my dad... someone around you had died from cancer. You steel yourself for the worst, ugly scenarios that you don't want to talk about racing through your head. For how long? When do I find out?

After 6 minutes that seemed like an eternity, I finally get a call from my wife. The scan is clear. No sign of cancer anywhere else. Looks like we're at Stage 2 cancer, which is, pretty much literally, a life & death difference between the Stage 4 it could have been! Chemo begins May 16th. Life has some semblance of order again, and that's really what makes cancer so bad. By definition, cancer is disorder. Cells doing things they're not supposed to do. That disorder cascades out of your physical body and infects your mental well being, and that of those around you. But today, we have a plan, and that plan, finally, supplants the fear.

Thanks to all for the kind thoughts and prayers along the way. Life is a journey where only the beginning and end are certain. We were born, and we will die. We get frustrated over all the things we can't control, because our lifestyles are all about planning and dreams and often acquiring things along the way. Cancer strips that away, due to its callous entropic randomness. What it leaves us with, and whom, makes the journey bearable or intolerable. We need to concentrate more on those things that can't be stripped away. Our faith, our less-selfish desires and... there should be a 3rd thing here, but it's not coming to me. Maybe it's our friends and family. Just the few weeks since Karen had her surgery and unpleasant pathology report have been enough to witness some degree of cancer's ability to divide and conquer rather than pull the family together. We will be better next time. It might be Karen 20 years from now, or it could be me in 5. You just don't know, but I'm learning that it's a bad move to put too much emphasis on the cancer itself and not enough on things-less-physical. I've written and re-written the last two sentences a number of times and still don't quite have it! Hate that. Hate cancer even more. --Mike--