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6 STEPS
TO SUPPORT YOU
AFTER CANCER



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1. YOU'VE PHYSICALLY RECOVERED BUT YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU ANYMORE

I hear this a lot! Recovery can mean many things depending on the situation and the context. Your consultant might refer to your recovery from surgery, but that's only one aspect of recovery and not the totality of it.

Q: What does the word recovery mean to you?



2. YOU'VE HAD SO MUCH SUPPORT FROM DOCTORS, NURSES, FAMILY AND FRIENDS BUT NOW YOUR SAFETY NET HAS GONE

From diagnosis to end of treatment we're swept up into the care of health professionals and together we're all focused on getting through this life-threatening diagnosis. We feel part of something, we are someone, we have appointments to attend and familiar faces to see on a regular basis. When that support is withdrawn it can be a very challenging time.

Q: Ask yourself what that support meant to you and what you need now as you enter the next phase of your recovery?

3. TIME FEELS PRECIOUS NOW. YOU HAVE A SENSE OF URGENCY TO DO THINGS THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE BEFORE.

This is a common feeling post-cancer. You've been threatened by a life-changing or life-limiting diagnosis and you recognise how short life is. You've lots of things that you plan to do at some stage in your life but cancer has created an urgency to put plans in place now.

Get a piece of paper and write down all the things you plan to do. Maybe it's a short list, maybe a long list, it doesn't matter just keep adding to the list. When you've finished, prioritise the top 10 things and then reduce that down to your top 5 things.

Q: What steps do you need to take to do those 5 things?

4. IT FEELS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN LEFT BEHIND BY FRIENDS WHILST YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH TREATMENT.

For several months, or even years, your diary has been booked up with a range of healthcare appointments - nurse appointments, consultants, surgeons, blood tests etc. In amongst those appointments you probably haven't been feeling great, or feeling sociable or like getting out of comfy clothes to go out. Now you'd like to enjoy time with your friends but you don't know where to pick up from.

Perhaps start with one friend and arrange a meet up for coffee and cake. This can be a gentle re-introduction to being sociable again but without it being overwhelming as you find your feet.

Q: What would you share with that friend to help them understand what you've been going through?



5. YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT YOUR RETURN TO WORK BUT YOU'RE NOT MOTIVATED BY YOUR JOB LIKE YOU USED TO BE AND YOU FEEL GUILTY

This is a big one! It's very common to look at our life through a different lens after cancer. Our jobs or careers filled the majority of our time and we were invested in doing a good job. Since our diagnosis perhaps our boss, and/or the organisation has been very supportive through keeping in touch, offering support and facilitating a gentle return to work. When we then experience feelings of not wanting to be there anymore or wanting to do something different with our working lives it can bring up feelings of guilt.

Your employer naturally wants you to return to work and has a legal obligation towards you after a cancer diagnosis. But after cancer our priorities can change, we place higher value on how we spend our time, where we spend it and what we do with that time. It could be an opportunity to work with a coach to understand your values, your strengths and what motivates you so that any future decisions you may make about your job or the direction of your career align with your values. This can lead to a greater sense of fulfilment in both your work and personal life.

6. NOTHING FEELS NORMAL NOW

Life won't go back to normal, you've been through a major trauma, but you will find your new normal. Working with a life coach can really help you find your way to the new normal. I'm bound to suggest this one but it was life-changing for me. Coaching will help you identify where the pinch points are in your life now and where things aren't lining up. It will help you peel back all the layers that we are buried under as we show up and be someone for so many other people in our lives - the partner, the parent, the sibling, the son or daughter, the colleague, the employee, the friend etc. Coaching will support you to see and recognise the real you and what you want for the next phase of your life. It will help you feel inspired and motivated by all the things you want to do. It will support you to feel empowered to put the steps in place to do those things. It will support you to find your new normal.

SO

WHAT NEXT?



If you're wondering what support might be right for you, get in touch for a chat. We can talk through where you are, what you're looking for and whether one of our group programmes or 1:1 coaching could be a good fit.

There's no pressure or commitment, just an informal conversation to see if Beyond Here feels right for you.



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