



## PETE'S STORY

*My name is Peter Newland and I am 56. I was born in Plymouth, England, and I emigrated to Australia in 1973 with my family, which consists of 3 brothers and 1 sister.*

I have a wonderful partner Gae, she is my absolute world and undoubtedly my rock; we have been together 18 wonderful years. I have twins who are 20. My son Zac is very active and into health and fitness, particularly heavy weightlifting where he competes in Singapore in the Parkour events. My daughter Keshna is also into health and fitness; she competed in numerous cheerleading events as the flyer, and is involved in acrobatics, spending more time on her hands rather than her feet! I am so proud of them all.

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*What I enjoy about life is living! By living I mean living: dancing in the rain, racing leaves down the gutters, stopping to smell the flowers and anything that involves animals and adrenaline.*

I have been fortunate enough to have raced at over 300km in a drag car, jumped out of a plane, rode in a tank, fed a crocodile, patted a rhinoceros, fed a Sumatran tiger, but still on the bucket list is swimming with the beast of the sea... the Great White Shark.



I was diagnosed with a renal cell carcinoma in 2008. I had no symptoms, and it was during a screening scan that they found a 10cm tumour on my left kidney. I still remember the radiologist saying “oh” when he came across it! By the time I left the clinic my GP was on the phone requesting an appointment.

I certainly wasn't expecting to hear the word cancer come out of my GP's mouth, and nothing prepares you for that diagnosis.

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All my senses shut off and a feeling of numbness overtook me. The doctor was talking but I wasn't listening. I was just trying to comprehend and decide what I was going to tell my family. I remember leaving the clinic saying nothing, signing nothing. I was in tears and felt quite vulnerable.

I remember driving to the local park, where I just sobbed as I just didn't know what to do.

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*I decided to be strong and transparent.*

When I got home, and shared the results with my then 8-year-old twins and Gae, I had to be strong as I watched them fall apart. Gae was speechless. Keshna curled into a fetal position and cried, whilst Zac simply said, "you will beat it".

I had surgery, a full left nephrectomy in 2008, on the day after Boxing Day, and spent New Year's Eve in a hospital bed before returning home to rest up and then return to work. The doctors and nurses were amazing, but as far as information, it was minimal and I had to work that out for myself.

My GP was great. We had regular follow-up appointments and x-rays to monitor me but no treatment plan. Life just simply continued. I put on weight and continued to work long hours.

So, for the next six years life went on as usual. Until Oct of 2014, when a follow-up chest X-ray showed that the cancer had returned. Once again, I was broken and telling my family that this time I was deemed terminal was not an easy conversation. But I was honest and transparent, and reassured them that I was going nowhere! Zac said to me that I had beaten it once and I would do it again.

My oncology appointment was scheduled for 4 weeks and in that 4 weeks I made the decision that I was going to do this my way, regardless of prognosis. It gave me time to research, to network and build connections. Everything was moving at 100 MPH. I managed to find and meet a British journalist who was into holistic treatments as well as molecular scientists and a naturopath. Now, 12 years later, I still keep in contact with them. They are dear friends who are always looking for ways to support my health.

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**Gae and the family were amazing over this period of time, fully supportive of my decisions and the life changes I was going to make.**

Friends became distant as they just didn't know what to say, but I needed to focus on the positive and stick to my decisions as I chose to live challenging the status quo.

When appointment day came, I was armed with every possible piece of information from books, journals, conversations, support groups and tireless hours from searching the internet. I was ready. I remember being composed, calm and respectful but my anxiety was through the roof. The life changing moment was when I was told the diagnosis and prognosis: stage 4 cancer with multiple metastasis throughout my lungs, lymph nodes, pancreas and throat. I was given 12 months and told to get my affairs in order. I was deemed untreatable: no chemotherapy, no radiation and no surgery.

Well, I wasn't expecting that! Nor was I ever going to accept that prognosis. They didn't know me and I was not going to roll over!

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*It was at that moment that I made a promise: a vow to never give in, that I would walk my daughter down the aisle and I would stand beside my son on his wedding day, come hell or high water. Nothing was going to stop me.*

For the next 12 months it seriously felt like I had a stopwatch strapped to my wrist counting backwards every hour, every minute, every second of every day, until that 12-month period of time had passed. But I never gave cancer a negative thought. I learnt not to fight cancer, but to live life. It was my second chance to right some wrongs, enjoy life and be spontaneous, connect spiritually, and make amazing memories.





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*What I really discovered was the power of your mind, which is the most useful weapon when it comes to dealing with cancer. I changed my language from fighting, as I think that fighting has a negative feel.*

My mindset changed, I became strong and I challenged my mind and body and together, Gae and I enjoyed and continue to enjoy every day. We also continue to make many amazing memories. We are always looking forward and enjoying life's wonders. I continue to work full-time and my work place has truly been amazing—fully supportive and I am given time when I need it. I am truly blessed as it has now been seven years since that prognosis, with stable disease as I continue to achieve in both my career and my personal life. Hence my mantra: I CAN and I WILL.

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*It's about finding what works for you and sticking to it.*

My advice to others in this situation is to have patience. Stay healthy and take quality time with your loved ones. Be respectful to doctors and others, don't rush into decisions, surround yourself with fur babies! Unfortunately, there is no one book with all the answers as everyone is different. It's about finding what works for you and sticking to it. Always challenge, stay positive, and find your passion.