A couple’s journey with prostate cancer

Dave and Kathie Houchens
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A couple’s disease!
We’re in this together.

- We did not choose to belong to this club!
- We want to maintain some control over our circumstances.
- We want to remain strong, hopeful, united.
- We want to maintain freedom and excitement in our relationship.
Dave’s story

- 2001 to 2010
- Initial treatment and recovery
- Changes in diet; addition of supplements
- Hormone ablation and its effects
- Radiation
- ED challenges
Kathie’s story

- 2001 – emotional reaction – FEAR
- Learning how to support Dave.
- Taking care of myself, too.
- Adjusting priorities.
- Learning about PCa
  - reading, listening, attending conferences
- 2010 – emotional condition – HOPE and GRATITUDE
Kathie and Dave

- Finding ways together to help others.
- Feeling empowered as we participate in support groups together.
- Making it our joint mission to encourage others and be present to them.
What about Intimacy?

**Obstacles?**
- Physical challenges
- Emotional challenges
- Spiritual challenges

**Opportunities?**
- Learn more about our bodies
- Share more openly our emotions
- Seek a deeper inner source of wisdom
Choosing to love.

- Yes, LOVE is a choice.
- LOVE is wanting the best for the other person.
- LOVE is putting another’s interest above your own.
- LOVE is patient and kind.
- LOVE brings life…is life…is what we live for.
What can block intimacy?

- Angry?
- Too tired?
- Too busy?
- In a hurry?
- Afraid?
- Depressed?
- Not sure how your partner will react?
Recognize differing needs and desires.
Affirm and encourage each other.
Seek professional help if necessary.
Find ways to relieve stress.
Find new ways to play, in and out of the bedroom.
Casper, look at that big bum!
What makes intimacy easier?

- Slow down, make time to BE.
- Find ways to feel good about YOURSELF.
- Risk opening a conversation about intimacy.
- Trust that your partner will be grateful.
- Relax and just BE together.
Lovin’ ....bring it on!

- Babies are programmed to thrive on touch, cuddling touch, unconditional loving touch.
- We never outgrow the need to be held and cherished.
- Being close and sharing all of yourself with your partner can be like experiencing heaven.
New levels of intimacy

- Talking – listening
  - (COMMUNICATION is key!)
- Observing
- Being understanding and patient
- Encouraging
- Remembering
- Celebrating
Create your unique style

- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
- Discover what is satisfying and pleasurable to each of you / both of you.
- Keep on loving
  - Emotionally
  - Physically
  - Spiritually
New ways of being well together

- Eating – cooking
- Exercising
- Finding pleasure in every day
  - Hobbies
  - Relationships
  - Volunteering – helping others
- Napping
- Slowing down (it’s OK to just “be”)
  - We are human BEINGS (not human DOINGS)
Where do we go from here?

- **Be pro-active**, assertive, take charge of making your life better.
- **Be in touch** with your own needs. Voice them to the appropriate person.
- **Be receptive** to hearing your partner’s point of view.
Enjoy every day.

- Laugh together. (with…not at…)
- Laugh some more. The brain releases endorphins that are healing to the whole body.
Intimacy grows when we share ourselves.
Love grows the more we give it away.
Find a way to reach out as a couple with what you know, what you have experienced, the truth of your story.
When you connect with others, you are enriched.