

[Hodg'kin's Lym•phoma] Patient

The Domino Effect



Determination

DOCTOR'S COMMENTARY

by Eleonor Quan, MD

Everything in my life was lining up perfectly, just like dominos. I had just met my girlfriend, Amber, and was head-over-heels in love. I was about to begin a successful career as a civil engineer. My family has always been supportive; my brother is my best friend. I never imagined my bright future could be derailed by cancer.

But that's exactly what happened. I got the call confirming my test results when I was having lunch with Amber and my mother, right before going on a business trip. We all sensed my life would change tremendously.

And it did. But God must be on my side because I was told my type of cancer, Hodgkin's Lymphoma, was curable. My oncologist, Dr. Eleonor Quan, was extremely experienced and compassionate. Cancer did not stop the dominos from falling perfectly in place. Amber and I married, and she gave birth to two gorgeous twin boys (yeah, brothers). I am working in land development as a civil engineer and my cancer is in remission.

by Brian Patschull

One of the most difficult tasks for a medical oncologist is to tell a patient he or she has cancer. It is even more so when it involves a young patient.

I first met Brian in February of 2003 when he was 23 and in the prime of his life. He had a girlfriend whom he planned to marry; he worked full-time, was pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering, and wanted to start a family.

When I informed him that he had Hodgkin's disease, Brian, his mother, and his girlfriend were anxious and very concerned.

I explained to Brian that his cancer was curable with chemotherapy. Since the treatments could potentially leave him sterile, I referred him to a sperm bank. Things seemed even worse when he learned that his sperm count was low.

Instead of being discouraged, Brian was determined. He did not want anything to deter him from his goals. He decided to receive chemotherapy, but he did not want to slow down. Brian continued to work during his treatments, and in fact never missed a day of work. He did put his education on hold for a while, though, as he needed time for his treatments.

After chemotherapy, Brian received radiation treatments to the chest. He only rescheduled one Friday appointment because he needed to take a professional licensing exam.

Shortly after completing his treatments, Brian celebrated by having a bachelor's party, hosted by his brother.

I thought Brian's life couldn't get any better in January of 2005, just a month after his last treatment, when he and his fiancée were married.

But I was wrong as six months after getting married, Brian told us that he and his wife, Amber, were expecting. Today,

Brian is a proud father of healthy, six-month old twins conceived by natural means. Brian remains in remission, and he is working as an engineer in the land development industry.

We all can learn from Brian; he had such a good attitude, and he persevered. He was also so lucky to have such a supportive family.



Brian, Amber, Brennan and Jack Patschull

