

[Cō'lon] Cancer Patient

The Mind-Body Connection

Strength

As a martial arts instructor with a black belt in karate, I have faced many opponents. But one of my toughest battles has been with cancer. It is an insidious physical battle. It is greedy, horrid, and elbows away every healthy cell...if you let it. Cancer does not discriminate; it comes unannounced and permeates the body. But it cannot touch my spirit or infect my soul. I have learned to deflect adversity like a warrior. I know that there is no challenge I cannot undertake.

After being diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer in July 2003, I have not lived my life any differently. To fight my cancer, I became a member of the team at Pacific Shores Medical Group and view them as my personal trainers and coaches. Dr. Liem is my oncologist, CeCe is my lead nurse, Lisa and Irene are my research coordinators, and many others are on my side. The love from my family and friends, my faith in god, and my internal power enable the warrior within me to keep on living.

by Barry Collings

DOCTOR'S COMMENTARY

by André K.D. Liem, MD

When I first saw Barry Collings, I knew he was a fighter. He looked at me in the eyes and said, "We are going to beat it, doctor."

Barry, a black belt in karate with his own martial arts studio, was facing his most difficult opponent—colon cancer that spread to his liver.

As I described treatment options to Barry, I mentioned a clinical trial that tested a pill that would be taken along with conventional chemotherapy. The medication was designed to inhibit the growth of blood vessels that feed the tumor. Barry understood that since this was a trial, there was a chance he would be getting a placebo instead of the medication, and agreed to participate. As the study progressed, a PET scan revealed there was no active cancer. At the study's conclusion, we received a notification that he had received the study medication.

Since Barry's initial diagnosis, another drug called Avastin®, which also works by inhibiting the growth of blood vessels, has become available. Barry is currently receiving Avastin®, is feeling well, and is back to work as usual.

You don't have to have a black belt in martial arts to fight cancer. But it certainly helps to be motivated, focused, and have the willpower to fight. It will be easier to undergo treatment when you focus on the ultimate goal.



Barry Collings

