



How a testicular cancer survivor used the Web to keep in touch

and keep his spirits up



In late 2004, life was good for 28-year-old Bill McDaniel and his fiancée Stacy. Within about a month, however, things would change. Bill found a lump in his left testicle. Although his doctor put him on antibiotics – the standard treatment for a suspected infection – and said not to worry, Bill did worry. The lump grew larger and more painful. While pain is not usually a symptom of testicular cancer, in Bill’s case, it was just that. “It looks like cancer,” Bill’s urologist said after imaging tests.

With that diagnosis, Bill and Stacy girded themselves for the challenges ahead. The first one came immediately: Bill, a software engineer, was going to lose his job because his company was about to be sold. It was not a welcome turn of events, but thanks to COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), Bill was able to keep his insurance coverage. And Bill found an upside to being unemployed. It gave him time to focus on his

upcoming treatment and recovery.

Although relatively rare, testicular cancer does affect about 8,000 men each year in the United States. Fortunately, it is a highly curable form of cancer, but that doesn’t mean that treatment is easy, as Bill found out.

The first step, surgery to remove the testicle, went well and it seemed that it would all be smooth sailing. “In just more than two weeks I was almost fully recovered, and even able to run and ride a bike,” he recalls.

However, the second step, chemotherapy, was particularly hard for Bill. Twice he ended up in the emergency room with severe side effects. His blood pressure plummeted, his temperature skyrocketed; he had shortness of breath, profuse sweating, ringing in his ears, and general disorientation.

Fortunately, Bill had created an outlet for chronicling his journey through treatment – his very own Web log, or blog, a kind of online journal. People with cancer have often used journaling as a way of coping with their diagnosis and treatment, but technology adds a new dimension to the process. It actually allows close friends and family to log on to the blog and follow the journey, too – through photos and Bill’s own postings. In Bill’s case, it not only helped his friends and loved ones, it helped him, too. He found himself wanting to make his “readers” smile, so he posted wry observations about life in the emergency room, hospital food (which he maintains he liked), and the advantages of being bald. Focusing on the lighter side of an otherwise serious situation actually lifted Bill’s spirits.

Bill also used his blog to express his great appreciation for the support of his mother and his many friends. And he paid special tribute to his fiancée Stacy, writing “Stacy has borne the worst duty in this war. It’s her job to rush me to the ER and to hold me all night when I’m in the worst place I’ve ever been. Nobody gives her any drugs to make the pain and the anguish go away. She’s left there once I stabilize to try to relax a little bit, but she must always be ready.”

Fortunately, towards the end of 2005, Stacy was readying for something else – her September marriage to Bill, who was, at last, cancer free. Despite the whirlwind of wedding planning, buying a new home, and Bill’s taking a new job,

the couple always paused to reflect on what is truly important. Even now, when things get chaotic, Bill reminds himself, "... we already have so much to be thankful for and so much to enjoy in life – the way that it is right now – simply to exist is the most valuable gift, truly an incredible and amazing thing."

[Learn More](#)

[Click here to get more information on this subject from the American Cancer Society's online bookstore.](#)

**For more cancer information, call 1-800-ACS-2345
or visit www.cancer.org, anytime, day or night.**

[Contact Us](#) | [New Connections Home Page](#) | [Legal & Privacy Information](#)

This information is for informational purposes only. This information is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your condition. Use of this online service is subject to the disclaimer and the terms and conditions.

Copyright 2007 © American Cancer Society
National Home Office, 1599 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30329