

THE GAWLER FOUNDATION

GAVE ME HOPE



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After years of feeling that something was not quite right, I was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2009. I had surgery to remove my stomach in early 2010 and the operation was deemed a success. I was told that the cancer had spread to about 12 lymph nodes adjoining the stomach, which were also removed. However, it was not known whether the cancer had spread beyond.

A few days after surgery, it was suggested I follow the operation with chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment, to ensure that all cancer cells were destroyed. I listened but in my heart I knew I would not go through with this. My body had already gone through enough with the removal of my stomach. Life was no longer the same, but I was *alive*.

A year later, I had a blood test to see what was happening within my body - the results weren't good. An MRI scan later showed that I had secondary cancer in an isolated lymph node close to the liver. This *was not* good news. If the cancer was in the liver, it could have been surgically removed depending on its location, but in a lymph node?! The cancer could now spread throughout my body via the lymphatic system.

My surgeon made it clear that having surgery a second time was highly risky. It was too close to other organs and no one as yet could pinpoint the cancer's exact location. This was an agonising time for me. I certainly wasn't scared of dying but I did not want to leave my precious grandchildren whom I adore, as well as my own children and partner. I visited my oncologist to discuss my options. His preferred treatment was chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy. This was not an option for me as I really believed that it would greatly



impair my immune system. I decided to research other opinions, with one oncologist telling me I had between four and eight months to live.

If I managed to live eight months, I would live to celebrate Christmas 2011...If I was lucky.

In mid-2011 one of my workmates mentioned The Gawler Foundation. I must confess that I had never heard of this place or its founder, Ian Gawler, before. He had beaten cancer approximately 30 years earlier and he too was given a death sentence. After some initial enquiries, I booked in for a 10 day retreat and I have never looked back.

The Foundation gave me *hope* and I still carry this with me to this day.

I'm practising much what the Foundation is advocating and I'm very happy to say I'm still alive today, some three years past my dreadful diagnosis, and feeling fabulous.

I use various non-toxic supplements and meditate and exercise on a daily basis as it is an important part of my routine. I very carefully monitor the food I eat and drink.

I go for my regular check-ups with my oncologist and still visit my surgeon. My last blood test showed that the tumour count had dropped. I'm hoping this will continue and put me in remission. Health wise I'm feeling fantastic. I'm pain free and hopefully it will always be this way for me. *I am a cancer warrior!*