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PROFILE

The Power of Two

For Anne and Charles Reinwald, overcoming cancer was just the beginning

by Twig Mowatt



Anne and Charles Reinwald did not set out to take on the American medical establishment—it just turned out that way. The retired high school teacher and her husband, a former attorney and investment advisor, were just settling in to what was planned as a relaxing, rewarding time of life, full of visits with the grandchildren, fulfilling volunteer work, and winters in Florida, when they received the call to arms more than four years ago. It came first to Anne, in the form of multiple myeloma, a virulent form of cancer that metastasizes quickly. Charles had dedicated himself to helping Anne when he was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer just 11 months later.

Now Charles, at age 77, heads up the Cancer Cure Coalition, a nonprofit organization he founded that is dedicated to finding and promoting new and better cancer treatments—something he says the FDA, because of bottlenecks in the drug approval process, has been slow to address.

“The regulatory process is so long and demanding—it can take up to nine years for a new drug to be approved and cost up to \$800 million—that some very helpful new treatments aren’t even being used,” says Charles. Through interviews, articles, speeches, and a website (www.cancercurecoalition.org), and with plans for a television show and book, he and his Cancer Cure Coalition are working to help people with cancer.

Charles has learned enough about the full array of cancer treatments to rival the knowledge base of most oncologists and to challenge many of their conventional treatments. “I stopped everything when Anne was diagnosed,” Charles said recently from his home in Scarsdale, NY. “I began

reading all the cancer literature I could find and attending all the medical meetings I could get into—usually as the only non-scientist in the audience. I went to California, Florida, Massachusetts—all over the country.”

Though Anne had complained of acute neck pain for years—to the point of being hospitalized—her neurologist and orthopedist were stumped. Their best guess was cervical arthritis. Finally, in January 1999, pressure in her ear sent her to an ear, nose, and throat specialist, who spotted a growth during his examination. An MRI showed a six-inch, sausage-shaped tumor that began at the base of her brain and extended across her skull toward her left ear. A painful and dangerous biopsy followed, resulting in the diagnosis of multiple myeloma. Survival rates for this aggressive form of blood cancer are disheartening: without treatment, people may live up to six months; with treatment, most people live two or three years.

Anne began radiation to shrink the tumor and chemotherapy to retard the disease, but both husband and wife knew these measures alone would not stop the cancer, which had spread through her blood and into her bones. Battling multiple myeloma requires so much chemotherapy that the treatment eventually destroys the immune system, ultimately necessitating a bone marrow transplant.

“What really distressed me about this type of treatment is that it’s so devastating and almost all patients die from the disease anyway,” said Charles. “I was determined to find something better for my wife.” Anne was thoroughly grateful for the efforts of her husband of 41 years. “He was very helpful, reading all the literature and going to meetings on cancer,” says Anne. She adds that Charles’ upbeat attitude was just as important in helping her through her illness: “He’s so good to be around. Whenever I feel down, he picks me right up.”

In the fall of 1999, Charles wrangled an invitation to a lecture on the promise of thalidomide as a treatment for multiple myeloma. Thalidomide gained notoriety when it was found to cause birth defects in the 1950s, but has been used recently to treat leprosy. Charles learned that it had shown positive results in treating multiple myeloma. After conducting additional research, he persuaded Anne's doctor to let her try the medication. Although Anne experienced some side effects (including constipation, nerve damage in her lower legs, and itching), she began responding to the treatment.



That was a blessing, because the Reinwalds were in need of some good news. A routine blood test in December 1999 indicated that Charles' prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level was 27. The higher the level, the more likely that cancer is present, and any reading above 20 is considered "highly elevated." Just two months later, Charles' PSA had risen to 32 and he was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. Charles opted not to pursue the recommended treatments and surgery was not advised, as the cancer had probably spread outside the prostate gland.

Once again, however, Charles' research efforts proved worthwhile. He learned that an over-the-counter remedy called PC-Spes, consisting of eight Chinese herbs (including saw palmetto), had shown promise in halting advanced prostate cancer. In a clinical trial at New York's Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in 2000, 57 of 69 men with prostate cancer experienced a decline in PSA levels after two months using PC-Spes. Other trials corroborated these results. After just one month using PC-Spes, Charles saw his PSA drop from 32 to 23, and within four months it fell to zero. (Because of concerns about traces of pharmaceutical products found in the formula, its manufacturer subsequently withdrew PC-Spes from the market. For more information, go to www.cancercurecoalition.org.)

With both Reinwalds on the upswing, Charles intensified his cancer research and soon developed a nutritional protocol to which he and Anne diligently adhered. The protocol is based in part on anti-angiogenesis research, which theorizes that cancer cells somehow trigger the growth of new blood vessels to feed themselves and continue to thrive. Dr. Jonah Folkman, who discovered this process, advocates finding a way to "starve" these cells. His theory, once considered a hard sell to the medical establishment, has since gained ardent supporters such as Charles, whose nutritional protocol has adopted many anti-angiogenesis agents. Drawing on concepts he learned through the Life Extension Foundation, scientific research, and Eastern medicine, Charles also added products that stimulate the immune system to help fight cancer and that help fight cardiovascular disease, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

"The protocol should be modified to suit each patient," he explains. "The patient should be involved in the entire treatment process if it's really going to work well. The program involves lifestyle changes to live longer and be healthier and happier."

Charles's protocol includes a host of nutritional supplements—vitamins C, B, E, B6, and B12; CoQ10; selenium; CLA; melatonin; folic acid; alpha lipoic acid; and curcumin—along with foods such as green tea, tomato products, soy, curry, shitake, maitake, and reishi mushroom extract. The entire plan is available on the Cancer Cure Coalition's website. One to two alcoholic beverages per day—preferably red wine—also are recommended. "The program is so powerful that we call it a protocol to distinguish it from diet programs," Charles says. "I prefer that people take food products instead of pills whenever they can. For example, lycopene is powerful against prostate cancer and it's found in tomato products. So you can get the same results as a pill by eating a bowl of minestrone."



As a result of the program, both Anne and Charles are now so healthy and energetic they feel as though they have halted the aging process. The program has helped keep Anne's multiple myeloma in remission, even though she discontinued her use of thalidomide two years ago. Charles works full time in his mission to help others fight cancer. The Cancer Cure Coalition has expanded beyond its initial focus on prostate cancer and multiple myeloma to promote new and better treatments for breast, pancreatic, and other cancers.

"We have identified new cancer treatments that can cure people and that are not toxic," says Charles. "We're trying to bring these forward, get them approved and into the hands of medical professionals, and inform people so they can help themselves prevent and cure disease."

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