

January 2022, Issue 10

Dallas YACS-A-LOT

Newsletter

Well, well, well... I didn't think this newsletter would make it this far, but somehow this periodical has made its way into 2022 and has no signs of stopping soon.

Having to write this newsletter in advance is usually fine, but setting the tone for this one is proving difficult. Because, while you're reading this in January, I'm writing this from a world still teeming with the holiday spirit. I suppose I jumped the gun talking about resolutions last month. Oh, well.

Let's go with nostalgia this month because it's something everyone experiences, but I feel that it hits different with us, the cancer patients who might look at our past with a little more longing than most. Not necessarily for the youth, but because it held no cancer.

I write this from a place of contentment. I have good friends, a somewhat challenging job with friendly coworkers, and everything is going nicely. My cancer does not warrant concern right now.

Yet I find myself gazing back upon my late teens when my mind has nothing else to entertain it. Having been diagnosed with my brain at 20, I didn't realize that these were the last years before the 'restart' button was hit without my consent. For anyone who's ever played a video game, it's akin to having spent hours adventuring through a game only for the console's power to give out and you hadn't saved in a long time. All of your progress had been lost. And because you'd already spent so much time reaching that, you just stepped away from the game for a while, because replaying what you'd already accomplished didn't release the good brain chemicals as it did before. I'm now having flashbacks to my Game Boy Pokémon days

before autosave was a thing.

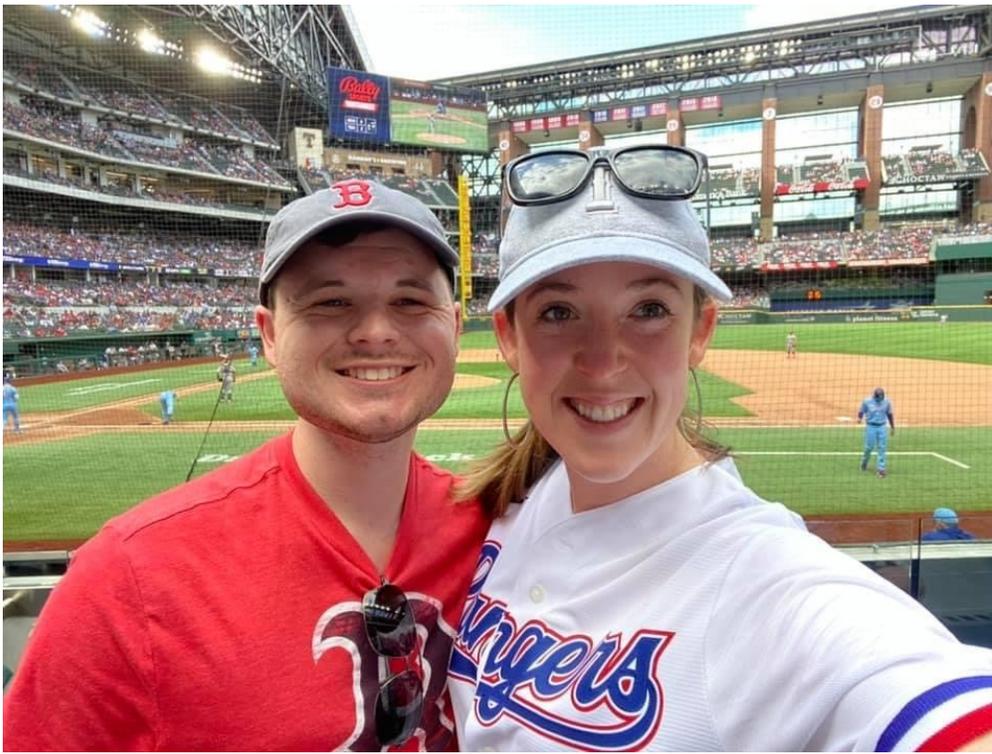
Getting back to the point, I think we miss our life plans from pre-cancer. Some of us can still reach that goal, but it's now a goal with more obstacles. And some of us cannot find the road to that goal again. As such, we're forced to realign our goals to fit our life now. For many of us, we wouldn't trade where we've ended up with anything else, but then for others, we can't help but feel a bitterness because we can no longer attain what we once aspired toward.

Of course, these are two ends of the spectrum, and because the world simply does not exist with this dyad of resolutions, there's a lot of space in between for us to land. We don't tend to be stationary here either; one day you may be perfectly happy where you are and the next you may find yourself looking over your shoulder to the dream gathering dust in your past.

Here's what I am constantly having to remind myself. There is no going back—elements from your past may pop up, but what is gone is gone and we must accept that. There is nothing wrong with reminiscing, but it becomes very difficult to move forward when you're always looking behind you. This is a platitude that's been around for eons, but I think it bears repeating for us.

And this makes an excellent segue for the next topic.

The committee is undergoing some changes as we expand and evolve. For the few who have not met Candance, she has been the emotional heart of this group and our committee since its creation a couple of years ago. She has never been a woman of half-assery, especially when it comes to sympathy within our group. If there are tears to be shed, she will break the dam for the rest of us. In a group where emotions are meant to be shared and many people don't know how to express themselves in front of others—hi there, mirror, nice to see you again—I admire and love the powerful warmth she has provided our group.



Knowing that this newsletter goes beyond our group, I won't go into details, but when mature language and adult topics need to be discussed in our group, Candace is usually the one to bust the door down. Showing us all that we need not fear or be embarrassed by the topic, whatever it may be.

Returning to the point, Candace is stepping down from the committee for the absolute best reason: after receiving sporadic treatment for the past five years, she has a chance to enjoy life with her family with minimal worries about cancer.

I'm so happy Candace has reached this point in her journey, and I imagine there will be no love lost when looking back at this part of her past. There's always a silver lining: we met her along the beleaguered path to NED-land. Don't worry, though, she's sticking around, just in a lesser capacity.

Anyway, this is life. Ever-changing. For the better and the worse. All I ask is that you remember to savor the good.

Anywho, this has been your monthly insight into and from the mind of Samuel Snow. On to the news.

Merchandise Reminder

Everyone should have the merch by this point, or at least have arrangements for it. I'd love to include pictures in future newsletters, so send those to [our email](#) if you have any, please.

For anyone who missed the opportunity to buy some merchandise, fear not! We will have another drop in the near future. As if you needed more incentive to keep up with our newsletter.

DALLAS YACS CALENDAR

January 12th, Wednesday, 7:00pm — Expressive Writing on Zoom

January 25th, Tuesday, 7:00pm — January Virtual Support Group

We are here for you!

Help us recognize your milestones! Do you have an appointment, scan, or cancer-versary coming up? Let us know so we can send you a note of support! Just follow the link below.

Share your milestone!

**Knowing The Group! Feat. Tejaswini
'Thejaa' Yarlagadda**

Sanskrit : Teja - Bright | Ashwini - Light | Yarlagadda - Family Name



This is Thejaa, a nickname she politely gave us permission to use. She was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer on October 20, 2020, at the age of 29. Here's what she responded when asked about her cancer and how it has affected her:

Cancer has been part of all my life. While at [the] age of 9 years old, I lost my maternal aunt to it and then I was 12 years old when I lost my Mom to it. So, I could never get that out of my mind. When I was looking at the future, I always knew it would come to this, didn't [know] when and how!!! But what I didn't [know] was that the people I thought would be there for me turned their backs to me. Thank god, that gave me the strength to realize my strength (Myself).

After college, I started my career as a software engineer with an MNC and that landed me in an opportunity to travel to Dallas, TX, United States in 2015, and somehow I was so busy with life that I was

starting to live my life out while doing annual checkups regularly.

Got married in 2018 and when the pandemic happened I missed my annual checkup scheduled on April 2020, and later in September 2020 I started to feel a tiny lump which turned [out] to be cancerous and that changed my life. Cancer diagnosis in a pandemic has not been easy and my husband is my rock (he also annoys me and we fight pretty much only on what food to eat most of the times :P) and Instagram has been my pillar through it all.

[The] beginning was [the] hardest for me cause it took a while for me to accept it was ok to let others judge you for the situation you are in. All my family blamed me for my drinking habits & dietary habits (I don't think that was the problem anymore, after 15 therapy sessions). None of them trusted me cause I was the only girl in the family who enjoyed alcohol occasionally and ate out most of the weekends compared to my cousins. I have met [a] few amazing people through Instagram and my introverted face started talking to new people and I think I can say I made few good friends. Getting out of my comfort zone has been good so far... and now I strongly believe the quotes I read somewhere: "We only regret the chances we didn't take," and "Life happens, let it happen."

Cancer has made *me* choose *me* in many situations there after!!! It has taught me real self-love :)

I need more submissions!

If you'd like to be featured in a future newsletter—and let's face the facts, if you're reading this, we want to feature you—then send us an email through [THIS LINK](#), bolded so you won't miss it.

As we receive your responses, they're added to our supply and we pull one per month for the newsletter.

Have Some Feedback?

If you have anything you'd like us to know that isn't covered in the survey or milestone link, tell us [here](#).

ROBERTO'S JOKE CORNER

Going classic this month. Why did the turkey cross the road?

Meditate then find out.

ALEX'S MEDITATION MOMENT

A Guided Meditation for R.E.S.T.

I have always struggled with slowing down (I am imagining your shocked faces reading this disclosure!), and I generally associated resting with napping, which I don't do well either. Any mindfulness practice focused on "quieting the mind" for long periods of time felt more like a challenge to escape reality than an invitation to any kind of awareness of just being. Yet as we enter another year with a global pandemic and many other hardships still looming, I feel the need to pause, to grieve, and to feel the fullness of reconnecting more now than ever, and the R.E.S.T. meditation has become a way for me to reimagine rest as a living mantra. I encourage you to explore these four pillars based on what you need in the moment. You may find it helpful to do so in order as a complete practice or spend time integrating one pillar into your experience of rest each day.

R.E.S.T.

1. Find a comfortable posture of your choice. This could be a sitting posture, standing, or lying down.

2. If you choose to keep your eyes open, let your gaze rest, lowered on a point in front of you. If you choose to keep your eyes closed, rest your eyelids comfortably.

3. Set your intention toward relaxing and effortlessness.

4. Whenever you notice yourself shifting into “doing” or “thinking,” simply return back to your original intention, and begin again.

5. R- Relax your attention. Release any fixation that you might have on any object. Be as ordinary and natural as possible. If you notice that your attention becomes fixated or distracted, simply relax. An image that comes to mind for R is a pebble gradually sinking in a bottomless body of water.

6. E- Exhale all striving. Empty yourself of any effort toward achieving a particular outcome or result. Remain open and accepting to the present moment. Let your experience be as it is. An image that comes to mind for E is someone pushing against a door to prevent another from entering, and then letting go.

7. S- Sense the silence. Surrender all attachment to what you notice, and feel the intuitive sense of silence within you- hidden in the back of the mind. Be aware of the silence and feel the spaciousness of the silence. An image that comes to mind for S is looking at the space around the objects in a room and then feeling the space in the room.

8. T- Tune in to awareness. Recognize that you are naturally aware, and you are conscious of this awareness. **Trust** this effortless knowing and the silence. There’s nothing to do, and nowhere to go. Just rest. An image that comes to mind for T is the sun effortlessly shining during all weather conditions.

9. When you are ready to end the practice, gently bring your attention to your surroundings and invite simple movements to your

body.

The turkey crossed the road to prove he wasn't a chicken.



PROMPT OF THE MONTH

What's the best thing you've gained in your cancer journey, be it directly or indirectly?

If you'd like your response featured in next month's newsletter, simply include it in an email to the group's email, dallasyacs@gmail.com.

That's it! You've reached the end of our newsletter. Until next time...

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