



# Advice for Moving Beyond the Shock of an Advanced Prostate Cancer Diagnosis

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**Joe**

Prostate Cancer Patient

**Yolanda**

Care Partner

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**Joe:**

Well, hi, I'm Joe. And in May of 2010, I was sitting at my desk, and I got a call from my primary care physician. And I had been going to him for a while because my PSA was high, and we did a biopsy, and so—well, let me back up.

It was my urologist that called me. And he says, "Joe? I'm sorry to tell you, you have cancer." And I felt like a Mac truck hit me. I was in the prime of my life. I was 53 years old. I'm 58 now. Things were going well. Life was great. And I was one of those kind of guys, unlike you're gonna hear from Bill, that I start spiraling down.

I told my supervisor that I was gonna go home, that I had been diagnosed with cancer. And I don't even remember how I got home. I work downtown. I live about maybe 12, 13 miles away, and all I can remember is pulling up into the driveway. I don't even remember how I got there. I drove myself, but I was just so consumed with that information that I had just received that I just sort of thought it was over.

I thought the worst. As I was going out, a colleague of mine said, "Hey, what's going on? What's wrong with you?" And I told this colleague that, and they said, "Yeah. So-and-so had that. He had that a few years ago. You want me to have him give you a call?" And I said, "Yeah, yeah. Whatever." So I remember saying that, but by the time I pulled up into the driveway, this gentleman called me on my cell phone.

And he kinda brought me back from the ledge at that point. And so the rest is history. I ultimately got into MD Anderson. I was part of a trial. I didn't give any hesitation to being a part of that. I sort of tried to ensure that I didn't think about the worst, even though it was difficult for me not to do that.

So it was scary for me when I heard that not only did I have prostate cancer, but I had advanced prostate cancer. And so I tried not to think about that. And so when the doctor put me in the trial, you sign all this paperwork about things, as the doctor said earlier, that potentially could happen, the side effects.

All that stuff made me nervous. And then the packet itself had advanced prostate cancer on it. And I was thinking to myself, they couldn't be talking about me. They must be talking about somebody else. So I kinda put that out of my mind and went through the trials, and had the side effects. I did experience quite a few side effects. But I had the support of my wife, and in the trials, we had frequent appointments here at MD Anderson.

And I had my wife with me, because I don't know if it was—I was on hormones as well as a chemo drug, so I don't know if it was the hormones or the chemos, but I couldn't remember everything that the doctor would tell me. So they told me to bring a pad. I would have my wife jot down our conversations, our meetings with the doctors. And often at night, I would ask her, "Are you sure that's what the doctor said?" So it was really scary for me.

But through my spirit, my relationship with the Holy Spirit, I'm here five years later, and I'm one of those lucky ones. I'm cancer free. My PSA is undetectable. And but...

Thank you. Thank you very much.

**Yolanda:**

Hi, my name is Yolanda, and I'm Joe's wife.

**Jeff Folloder:**

And Joe's wife. I'm gonna assume that means you're his care provider. Was your husband an easy patient to deal with?

**Yolanda:**

Yes and no.

**Jeff Folloder:**

Let's hear about the no first.

**Yolanda:**

He was one of those that—you brought the issue up earlier about having access to information, because MD Anderson provides you as a patient with a number, and you can go on and look at your results at your convenience.

And he would not only look at the results but provide additional interpretation to what the doctor had given him.

**Jeff Folloder:**

Google is your friend.

**Yolanda:**

And that wasn't good, because it made him really antsy about his prognosis. So that was the not good part. Now...

**Jeff Folloder:**

Okay, what about the good part, though?

**Yolanda:**

...he was really good at being a patient in that he's not the typical male patient.

He's very good at communicating, as you'll see today. He talks more than I do, and he really makes sure you understand his concerns because he does ask. And he's very good about making sure that he has a clear understanding, or that at least I got it if he didn't.

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