

Leukemia Free: 24 Years Later

The Doug Blampied Story

By Denise Rodgers

This article is about Doug Blampied, who is alive and well 24-years after being diagnosed with terminal leukemia – as a result of following a macrobiotic lifestyle.

“Is this the ‘Doug Blampied’ of the macrobiotic healing stories?”

“Yes it is,” said the strong and evidently healthy voice at the other end of the phone.

It was December 10, 2005. I was stunned, thrilled and delighted all at once. I was speaking with a man who had been diagnosed with terminal leukemia (AML or acute myelogenous leukemia) twenty-four years earlier and who had chosen to heal himself with macrobiotics. And who was obviously quite alive and well.

The conversation I had with this remarkable man proved to have a calming effect on me. I have a different form of leukemia (CLL or chronic lymphocytic leukemia), and while I’ve thankfully not been given a dire prognosis, the fact remains that I have an incurable, fatal disease and that for a while, at least, (just prior to going macrobiotic) it was progressing at an alarming rate. So my interest in what a 24-year (as in twelve months each!) survivor had to say was keen.

After reading just about every macrobiotic healing story I could find – both in books and on the Internet – I’ve always wondered about the accuracy and truthfulness of each account. I wondered if the stories were for real. And what happened next? Were these people still alive? That is why it was such a thrill to speak to one of these cancer survivors on the phone. Here is what I learned from

speaking with Doug Blampied.

Macro is not a quick fix. The impression I'd had from reading many of the abbreviated healing stories was that people with terminal cancer went through all the conventional medical channels with no lasting success, and then with nothing to lose but the taste of pizza and chocolate during the last months of their lives, chose the path of macrobiotics. They tried it, had immediate and positive response, discharged something in a dramatic fashion and went back to their oncologist a few short months later and had dramatically better test results.

While wildly appealing, this didn't seem to be my experience. I did lose a lot of weight, but other than a persistent ache in my neck from swollen lymph nodes, I was pretty well with no obvious macro discharge. Being me, I kind of worried about this. But my conversation with Doug was extremely helpful.

While his blood counts improved almost immediately after starting his macro diet (as did mine), there was no further change for one year, at which time his cancer counts started to improve. "Blood reconstitutes itself every 90 days, and your marrow every six months."

So Doug Blampied had a small, but immediate improvement that stayed steady for one year. It was three years before he was officially in remission. And it was about eight years before he was declared cancer free. Yes. Cancer Free. No more cancer cells in his blood.

Man does not live by diet alone. Doug stresses that family and community support is essential in healing on a macrobiotic diet. "I've worked with many people who had support and they did quite well. Those that felt that the diet was burdening their family, or who felt guilty about offering only macrobiotic food choices to

their family and friends, didn't do as well." Doug himself was fortunate to have the absolute support of his wife, Nancy, as well as the support of the people of Chubb Life America, where he worked as Vice President of Human Resources. "My company was very supportive of what I was doing, and it was extremely positive that I didn't have to worry about or dwell on anything but getting well," he says. "There is enough stress in dealing with cancer without having to deal with social pressures as well."

Chew, chew, chew. "I tended to gulp my food," said Doug, "so Nancy always reminded me to slow down and chew." It is a fact that the enzymes in saliva are the first line of digestion, and that chewing well is essential to maintaining – and regaining – good health. In fact, it is standard macrobiotic practice to chew each mouthful at least fifty times or until the mouthful is liquid. Not an appetizing thought, but important nonetheless.

Learning the macrobiotic philosophy. "It helped my psychologically to learn why this was good healthful eating," says Doug. "It was important not to take it just on faith." He recommends reading books and taking classes. He credits Anthony Sattilaro's book, "Recalled by Life," with starting him on the macrobiotic path. "After I read his book, I felt that if he could do it, then I could do it too!"

Other books Doug recommends include "Cancer-Free: Thirty Who Triumphed Over Cancer," an East West Foundation publication; "The Macrobiotic Approach to Cancer," by Michio Kushi and Edward Esko; as well as "The Cancer Prevention Diet," by Michio Kushi and Alex Jack.

Earlier in his healing years, the Blampieds were active in weekend macrobiotic events in New Hampshire, and sometimes in Brookline, Massachusetts. They would stay with host macrobiotic families and enjoy both the hospitality and the learning experience.

The Blampieds also hosted potluck suppers and weekend events that drew people from all over the state. They even had Edward Esko in to speak at their home for a group of thirty or so macrobiotic students.

In addition, Doug and Nancy took cooking lessons every Thursday night. "We went to the macrobiotic chef's home. We would learn to cook and then eat it." Often the Blampied's non-macrobiotic friends would come along. A woman at his local natural food store was interested and also came along for lessons.

Mind, body and spirit. Besides crediting his wife, Nancy, for her incredible support, Doug also feels that visualization and guided imagery played a part in saving his life. He recommends "Getting Well," by Carl Simonton, in both book and audio formats. "I was reliving wonderful experiences," he said. "The tape shows how to hypnotize yourself." It also helps you visualize the healing that is happening in your body at the cellular level -- as well as imagining a healthy and meaningful future. He spent three hours a day listening to these tapes, while sticking religiously to the macrobiotic diet.

Go for it! Here are Doug's thoughts on why he feels he was successful in overcoming his cancer and regaining full health. "When we first started, we got rid of the electric stove and microwave and converted to gas. We wore only cotton clothing. We did it! Others resist these changes," he said. The Blampieds also hired a cook who stayed in their home for nearly five months. "She was extremely helpful," said Doug. "It can be good to have someone else prepare your meals." She left the Blampieds with several recipes and instructions for continuing successfully on their own.

I have to say that it has been absolutely inspiring to speak both

with Doug and Nancy Blampied over the phone. Because of this contact, I personally have acquired a calmer, steadier attitude toward my practice of macrobiotics. I recognize that it is important to look at the big picture. While some healing stories that I've read indicate that complete healing can happen in a matter of months, I've accepted that my path might well be longer. It's also nice to know that just as the macro practice is not a quick fix, the results aren't short-lived either. Each time I've called the Blampied's, Doug has been out golfing or biking. Twenty-four years later, he is a vital and healthy man, living the great life that defines macrobiotics.

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