

“Because of the American Cancer Society, We Have Hope”

Fundraising Speech

(Delivered at a golf outing and fundraiser for the society)

EXCERPT 1: SPEECH OPENING

Ron and I are both survivors.

Ron is a seven-year survivor of prostate cancer.

And I am a six-year survivor of breast cancer.

Whenever someone tells me they’ve just been diagnosed with cancer, right away I tell them two things:

“First, this is not a death sentence.”

“And second, you are so lucky.”

That’s right. *Lucky.*

Because if you’re someone who’s destined to get cancer, this is absolutely the right day and age for it to happen.

Because today, you have hope.

Lots and lots of hope.

Fifty years ago, this was not the case.

I know because 50 years ago, my mother died of breast cancer at age 47.

Back then, no one talked about prevention and early detection.

No one knew the first thing about self-exams and mammograms.

(No one even said the word cancer!)

People used to whisper, “*She has cancer.*”

Because back then, cancer was a death sentence.

My family didn't talk about it. (I don't even remember being told about it!)

Because there was no education, no resources and no good treatments back then.

So Mom suffered.

In the 1960s, scientists were still testing chemotherapy.

Radiation was in use, but not perfected – so it burned my mother's skin, because the doctors had no idea how to control it.

Mom had several surgeries.

First they took one breast, and then the other. They removed her ovaries.

Her breast cancer led to bone cancer, which led to brain cancer.

There was no hope.

Her mental anguish was crippling, because she knew her fate.

She suffered for two long years before she went to the hospital, slipped into a coma and finally died a very painful death.

It was horrifying to watch.

And it devastated our family.

We were never the same.

EXCERPT 2: SPEECH CLOSING

Ron and I both owe our lives to the American Cancer Society – and to all of you.

You saved our lives!

While we are grateful, we are still mindful that there's so much more to do.

Because while all of us were enjoying a marvelous Monday of golf, good food and good friends – 1,600 more Americans died of cancer today.

The money we raise today will help to reduce that number and give even more people hope – and another shot at life.

So we must keep up the fight to increase survival rates – from 68 percent today, to what I hope is 100 percent tomorrow.

Ron and I are living proof of the society's good work – in awareness, education, research and advocacy – and the impact of your gifts.

Today, just like 13.7 million other Americans with a history of cancer, Ron and I get to celebrate birthdays because we are survivors.

Last year on my birthday, we took our grandchildren on a Disney cruise.

And this year on Ron's birthday, we spent two weeks in China.

Unlike my mother, we were not given a death sentence!

Instead, we were given hope. And life.

Thanks to you. And thanks to the American Cancer Society.

We **ARE** so very **LUCKY**.

Thank you. ◀