

CANCER OUTCOME MAP

How To Tackle Worry During Cancer

Hi friend,

With cancer, your optimism takes a hit – from now on, you expect everything to go wrong.

Worst part is, you can't even describe your worries because they build on top of each other and we want to break them apart.

You want to bring out into the open, examine your worries and deal with them, and the best way to draw those worries out, out of the shadows, is to write them down on paper so you examine it and sort it out there and then.

I have a prompt that instantly gets me going: “What worries me most about cancer right now is...”

It's for your eyes only so you don't need to filter anything out, that's how all the interesting things are going to come to the surface!

For looking at specific worries, we can use the outcome map to help visualise the problem and put it in context.

What you can do is write down what the next step is (first oncologist appointment, post treatment checkup, symptoms), the likelihood of each outcome as a percentage, and what you will need to do in each case.

I use [XMind](#), a free mind map tool available on most platforms, but you can use whatever works for you (pen and paper are often easier!)

Carry the map with you and as soon as your worries come up for you, you get your map out and retrace where exactly you are with cancer.

No more nasty surprises –you know what's coming and how to deal with it.

Hope it helps,

Joe

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How To Break Your Worries Apart: Template Prompt

What scares me the most about cancer right now is...

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How To Break Your Worries Apart: My Example

- What scares me the most about cancer right now is that I won't be able to work, lose my job and we'll have no money to live on

(Working out a solution to this made things a lot easier – I had a conversation with my manager, colleagues at work, and the big boss who have assured me my job is safe)

- What scares me the most about cancer right now is that the treatment won't work and I'm going to die

(I ended up getting support from cancer survivors on the online forum for testicular cancer and advice from my oncologist that there are other options available with salvage chemo or medical procedure)

- What scares me the most about cancer right now is the pain around the second testicle and if I lose the second testicle to cancer because I won't be able to have sex and my wife is going to leave me

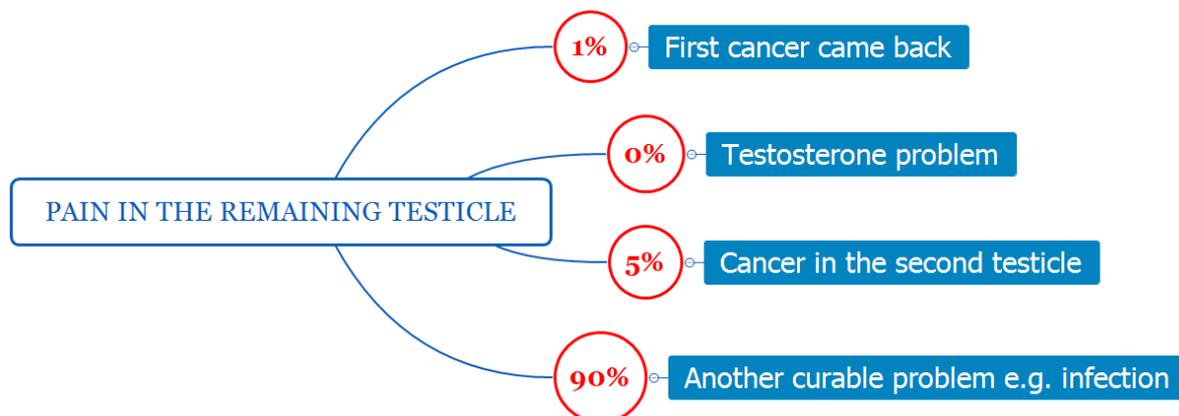
(Looking at it from outside brought home how scary yet irrational I have been and doing a detailed breakdown with outcome map helped put it in context that it's highly unlikely to happen anyway, see next page)

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Specific Symptom Example (ache, pain or discomfort)

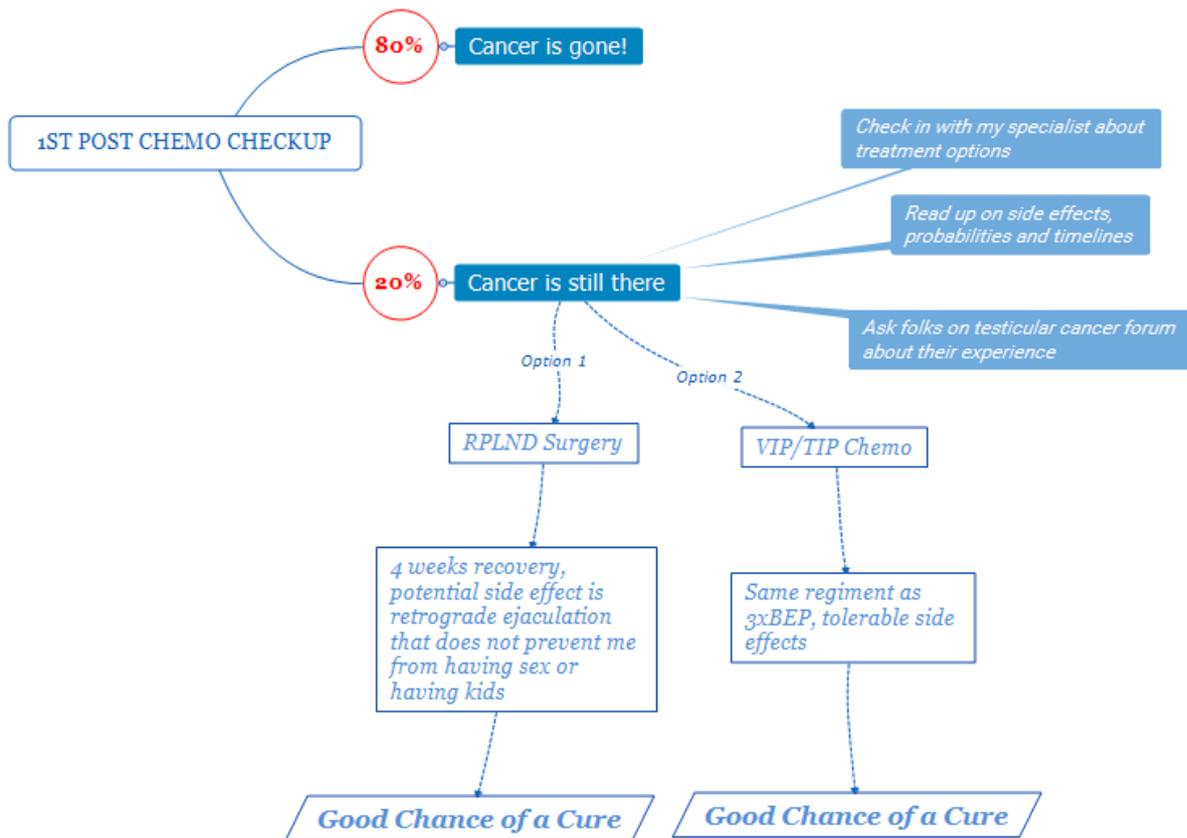
How to create your Outcome Map:

- You will only need a pen, paper and 5 minutes
- In the middle of the page, write down the specific pain, ache or other worry that's troubling you right now
- Next, write down each probable outcome
- This could be a side effect, a complication from treatment, muscle problem, or something else entirely
- Spend 30 seconds on each one to think through how likely each outcome actually is



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Upcoming Milestone Example (specific event with time and date)



My name is Joe and for me, cancer was always something that happens to somebody else - until it lands on you.

That's why it's such a shock - everything is up in the air and it's a big mental effort to pull yourself together and get on with life despite cancer.

Losing my testicle, chemo and procedure hammers home what I always knew, but was never forced to confront in a real, tangible way - how fragile and short life is and how I need to make the most of it, on my terms.



Joe Bakhmoutski

Founder of Simplify Cancer

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