



Butterflies and Roses

The newly diagnosed breast cancer patient reminds me of a butterfly. Shrouded in transcendent beauty; their fragile nature can be so easily tossed to and fro by the winds of adversity. During this dread experience, they make their way along the path of life with great difficulty sometimes appearing as if there is little direction to their forward progress, yet somehow making it to their intended goal. Sometimes only with great difficulty is their destination accomplished. Sometimes, the flight is smooth and undaunted and occasionally the path leads to an untimely end.

For those who survive and endure the flight the reward is met by a transformation of resolve and duty to help protect the species. At this point they become as roses. Majestic, beautiful yet delicate and filled with sweet nectar of life from which the butterfly may draw its sustenance. The rugged thorns, spawned by adversity, provide an unyielding source of resiliency and protection to the fragile butterflies that descend upon these flowers for sustenance. It is a magnificent transformation that occurs in the lives of these women whom I admire greatly. To play a small but instrumental role in that transformation from despair to hope, to a new fulfilling and more meaningful life, is a daily inspiration and constant testament to the undaunted human spirit. The sadness of those who enter and do not leave only strengthens my resolve to fight cancer together and search harder and work more diligently.

To be among the butterflies and roses has been a pleasure, at times chaotic and thorny, but for the most part beautiful and rewarding. It is my hope that we can all embrace the beauty and hope life brings despite the adversity and sorrow we each must face.

- Charles E. Cox, M.D.
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