

MAKING PLANS WHEN YOU DO NOT TRUST THE FUTURE

A practical reflection for living with uncertainty without putting your whole life on hold

Cancer can make ordinary planning feel strangely risky.

A holiday. A birthday. A new job. A wedding next year. Buying something for the house. Agreeing to meet someone in three months. Even writing something in the calendar can suddenly carry a question underneath it:

Will I be well enough?

Will the scan change everything?

What if treatment changes?

What if I am tempting fate by looking too far ahead?

You are not failing at optimism if planning has become difficult. Uncertainty changes how the future feels.

THE PROBLEM WITH WAITING FOR CERTAINTY

Cancer rarely gives perfect certainty. If you wait until you feel completely sure before making plans, life can quietly become smaller.

That does not mean ignoring reality or pretending nothing can change.

It means finding a way to make plans that can bend.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PLAN

Instead of asking:

“Can I guarantee this will happen?”

Try asking:

“Would I like this to happen if circumstances allow?”

That small change matters.

A plan does not have to be a promise.

It can be an intention.

It can have a backup.

It can be refundable.

It can change.

It can still be worth making.

THREE LEVELS OF PLANNING

1. Things I can reasonably plan now

These might be ordinary commitments that feel manageable with your current energy, treatment schedule or follow-up plan.

2. Things I want to plan, but with flexibility

These may need refundable bookings, a shorter day, someone else driving, a backup person or permission to cancel.

3. Things I am not ready to plan yet

You do not have to force the future open. Some decisions can wait without your life being on hold.

BUILD IN AN EXIT

Sometimes anxiety drops when a plan includes a way out.

For example:

- Book something that can be changed.
- Tell people you may need to decide closer to the date.
- Keep the day before or after clear.
- Have a transport backup.
- Choose the shorter version of the event.
- Give yourself permission to leave early.

Flexibility is not pessimism. It is good planning in an uncertain season.

WHEN OTHER PEOPLE PUSH FOR ANSWERS

People may ask:

“So what are you doing next summer?”

“Are you booking anything?”

“When will you be back to normal?”

You are allowed to answer honestly without explaining everything.

For example:

“I am making plans, just with a bit more flexibility than I used to.”

Or:

“I would like to, but I need to see how the next few months go.”

Or simply:

“I am not ready to decide that yet.”

A SMALL FUTURE IS STILL A FUTURE

When the long term feels too uncertain, shorten the horizon.

What would you like to have in the next week?

What would you like to have in the next month?

What is one thing later in the year that you would still like to leave room for?

You do not need to believe everything will go perfectly before you are allowed to look forward to something.

ONE THING TO REMEMBER

Cancer can change your relationship with the future without taking the future away completely.

You are allowed to plan carefully.

You are allowed to change the plan.

You are allowed to look forward to something while still being afraid.

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