Article Series Inspirational Stories

Adam’s story: The power of sharing

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ADAM H.
LIVING WITH CANCER SINCE 2016

Adam takes the stage in front of a packed house, using a cane to help keep his balance. Today, he's doing one of many talks he's given about his brain cancer diagnosis in 2016.

As usual, Adam is frank and humorous as he tells his story. He describes the day he was diagnosed and the baseball-sized tumor showed up on the MRI scan. He speaks

calmly and cracks the occasional joke, so it's hard to imagine that he ever endured seizures, brain surgery and chemotherapy.

> My talks and other activities are not done in the absence of symptoms, but despite them.

Along with being a public speaker, Adam is a writer who holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in philosophy. So it's no surprise that in addition to fearing for his long-term survival, Adam was initially concerned about how brain cancer might affect his ability to read and write.

And yet, Adam has used his scholarly background to face his cancer. He has educated himself on nearly every aspect of the disease. "I've been able to read through studies and medical literature and make sense of it." His goal is to write a paper about the treatment options for glioblastoma, as well as a memoir sharing his personal experiences with the disease.

> I want to promote research, as well as patient advocacy and education.

Article slides



Adam with his wife, Whitney, and their three sons.



Adam at a fundraiser for his alma mater, Indiana University.



Adam at a speaking event in Indianapolis, IN.



Adam at a local restaurant.

Adam uses his knowledge and insight to help others. He gives talks at local universities, and he recently joined a nonprofit organization devoted to raising money for brain cancer research and awareness.

A believer in the power of social media, Adam also shares his journey on his personal blog and with friends and family on social media. "Sharing, for me, is a way to keep the discussion honest and out in the open."

Adam admits that life since his diagnosis has not been easy. His cane and the scar on his head are outward evidence of his struggles, but they don't tell the whole story. "Just because I look healthy, it doesn't mean I'm feeling great. People can't see the headaches or the dizziness."

> I don't look like what many people think of as a person living with cancer. Often, my symptoms aren't visible to the outside world.

The support of his wife and three children has been crucial. "I was fortunate that my wife is an occupational therapist at a trauma hospital, so she was able to help us navigate the complexities of the healthcare system." He also found the support of

his oncology nurse to be invaluable. "We were all sharing hugs in our first meeting—we're huggers!"

Fueled by a desire to shed light on a complicated topic, Adam is learning all he can about his cancer. And in sharing what he knows, he is helping others find the light too.

> I tell my story because we are mortal. We are vulnerable. And we are at our best when we're supporting each other.