

## **For Immediate Release**

For a review copy of the book  
or an interview with Joni Aldrich,  
please contact Dottie DeHart,  
DeHart & Company Public Relations,  
at (828) 325-4966 or DSDeHart@aol.com.

### **The No-Excuse Zone:**

#### **Why the Combination of Excuses and Cancer Can Be Deadly**

*We all make excuses. But when you add them to a cancer diagnosis, you may be lowering your odds of a good treatment outcome. Joni Aldrich points out common excuses you might use to avoid overseeing your cancer battle plan after you're diagnosed.*

**Winston-Salem, NC** (April 2010)—We all have a million of them—excuses. And while some (like putting off vacuuming) are relatively harmless, others can have much greater consequences. Some of the worst excuses we make are for not getting our yearly wellness physicals, or for not going to the doctor when a medical concern goes on for too long. Unfortunately, even after hearing the dreaded words, “You have cancer,” many people still continue to put themselves in danger by offering up excuses for their failure to become informed and involved in researching and formulating a personal, proactive cancer battle plan.

“When people are diagnosed with cancer, their inclination is often to turn over their lives and treatment options to the healthcare industry because they are the ‘experts,’” points out author Joni Aldrich. “Unfortunately, it’s not as simple as that. You—the patient—will need to take part in many decisions, ranging from choosing a cancer treatment center and oncology team to deciding upon a treatment protocol.”

Aldrich knows about the subject of cancer—and its ramifications—all too well. In 2006, she lost her husband, Gordon, after a two-year battle with cancer. Her first book, *The Saving of Gordon: Lifelines to W-I-N Against Cancer* (Cancer Lifeline Publications, 2009, ISBN: 978-1-4392550-3-2, \$19.95), tells the story of the Aldrich family’s experiences while simultaneously offering valuable step-by-step advice that will give readers the tools they need to have a fighting chance against cancer.

“When you hear the ‘C’ word, your resistance kicks into overdrive,” Aldrich recalls. “So does the flurry of activity around you—all in the direction (hopefully) of starting the process to save you years of life. My husband Gordon preferred to ignore his cancer, but ultimately that’s not possible—or advisable. Cancer isn’t a disease for which the treatments are standard and somewhat ‘cookie cutter.’”

So, what does Aldrich recommend? “You must know the monster that you’re fighting. Isn’t that the strategy to win any battle—knowing your enemy? Luckily, there

are excellent resources available to help you, ranging from numerous websites to books written about cancer experiences—and don't forget to talk to other cancer families.”

Read on for more advice that will help you to keep excuses from holding you back and encourage you to be involved in your cancer treatment:

**Realize that everything will happen very quickly.** When you hear the words, “You have cancer,” time seems to stop, and you might literally feel that the ground has dropped away from beneath your feet. Afterwards, you return home and spend the evening trying to come to terms with the monster that has suddenly invaded your life. But as much as you might *want* the luxury of postponing your cancer counter-attack until you feel ready, one or two evenings of coming to terms with your diagnosis is all you can really afford.

“I know quite well how tempting it is to put off all thoughts of cancer after you or a loved one has been diagnosed,” Aldrich shares. “It’s part of the shock syndrome. But avoiding your cancer altogether can have disastrous consequences. You have to be prepared, and you will need to access information *quickly*. Cancer is by no means a convenient disease. Obviously, it doesn’t wait until you’re ‘ready’ to deal with it—because for most of us, that would be never. Depending on your type of cancer and how far it has progressed, it’s possible that you might begin treatments almost immediately. And you need to be prepared to hit the ground running.”

**Know what to expect before you go.** You wouldn’t begin a cross-country road trip without first mapping out your route, would you? Of course not. Well, the same thing goes for approaching your cancer treatments. Sure, you *could* just “show up” and hope for the best, but your odds for beating the disease increase if you take ownership of your cancer battle plan. You and your loved ones should proactively research the answers to questions including: What should I expect? How can I find the pertinent questions to ask the oncologist? How can I find the best cancer treatment center for my type of cancer? What should I look for in a primary oncologist? Are there clinical trials available that I might qualify to join? All of these become critical variables in your fight.

“Whatever type of cancer you have, it’s important to research it as well as its various treatment options *before* your first visit with your oncologist,” stresses Aldrich. “A lot of people don’t want to know—anything. While I respect their rights, I have to point out that you’re quite literally putting your life into someone else’s hands. This lack of maintaining control was one of the biggest mistakes that we made when we were trying to save Gordon.”

**Avoid letting doubts influence your choices.** Like it or not, it’s a fact of life that it’s much easier to be dragged down than lifted up. And unless you’re the stereotypical “cockeyed optimist,” you’re probably more likely to believe the bad news than the good. This tendency is bad enough when it’s only the six o’clock newscast at stake—but with cancer, a pessimistic mindset can have very detrimental effects on your prognosis.

“Somewhere deep inside, you’ll hear the voices of all of the cancer horror stories that you’ve ever been told,” Aldrich warns. “Sadly, we don’t often hear all of the good stories of cancer survival. Oh, we know about Lance Armstrong, but he was famous and an athlete. Without knowing that there are 12 million cancer survivors in our country, you can let fear become the most powerful motivator. You can’t afford to focus on it. Push it back. Learn everything you can—good or bad. Know the best- and worst-case scenarios, then work toward and expect the best.”

**Be more than an innocent bystander.** Never before has it been so important for you to insist on being in the driver’s seat—not even when you were choosing a college major, deciding which job to take, or agonizing over which house to buy. Because this time, your life is what’s on the line. Aldrich says that she can’t stress enough the importance of taking an *active* role in your cancer battle, from start to finish. Remember that the members of your oncology team are your partners, not your bosses.

“You can’t sit on the sidelines,” she reiterates. “There is way too much at stake for that. Instead of blindly giving the medical community your trust, react *with* them to build trust between you. Most oncologists will nurture your input and accept it as part of the fight for your life. And if you don’t want to or can’t do the research because of time constraints or minimal skills in that area, find a capable volunteer who can help you.”

In conclusion, Aldrich encourages everyone (even if you’re currently cancer-free!) to ask these questions: When that monster is released from the closet, how will you deal with it? Will you face it and attack, or will you turn and hide from it? Will you delegate others to shield you from it? Will you try to stuff it back into the closet, or get to know it—“warts and all”—as part of your strategic plan? The decisions you make—although difficult—will affect the rest of your life and well-being.

###

**About the Author:**

Joni James Aldrich believes that she has been preparing to write *The Saving of Gordon* for most of her life. As a child, she was a better than average student. She wrote dramatic poetry. Before college, she worked at a newspaper. In her professional career, she has worked in analysis, documentation, communications, and public speaking. She has also been able to incorporate her love of photography into the design of her books. However, her real motivation for writing *The Saving of Gordon* was two years of crisis in the cancer school of hard knocks. She feels it is her destiny to relay this story to readers in a way that will help them in their own cancer journeys. It is her hope that someday that journey will no longer be necessary for anyone.

Joni is also the author of *The Cancer Patient W-I-N Book: Our Cancer Fight Journal* and *The Losing of Gordon: A Beacon Through the Storm Called “Grief.”*

**For more information, please visit [www.thecancerlifeline.com](http://www.thecancerlifeline.com) and [www.griefbeacon.com](http://www.griefbeacon.com).**

**About the Book:**

*The Saving of Gordon: Lifelines to W-I-N Against Cancer* (Cancer Lifeline Publications, 2009, ISBN: 978-1-4392550-3-2, \$19.95) is available at bookstores nationwide and from major online booksellers.