



## ANNE FONFA INTERVIEW

### Breast Cancer

By Chris Wark

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## **ANNE FONFA INTERVIEW**

### **Breast Cancer**

Hey everyone, it's Chris with Chris Beat Cancer, and today I've got my friend Ann Fonfa. Ann and I met several years ago on the Internet, believe it or not. Ann has an amazing breast cancer survival and healing story, and she's been a really huge force in the alternative and complementary cancer treatment world. She runs the Annie Appleseed Foundation, which puts on a complementary and alternative cancer conference every year, in West Palm Beach, Florida. I had the privilege of speaking at that conference a couple years ago, and it's great. It's an absolutely great event. It's every April, and we'll talk more about that, as well.

Chris: Ann, thanks for taking the time.

Ann: My absolute pleasure. The conference is in March, by the way.

Chris: Great, perfect. So, before we get into it, let's just direct people to your site so they know. It's [AnnieAppleseedProject.org](http://AnnieAppleseedProject.org). The conference is when?

Ann: This year, it's March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in West Palm Beach, as you mentioned. And I want to mention that the weather is at least 75 degrees.

Chris: The weather was nice when I was there. We're talking about 2018, for people that end up watching this in the future. This is conference number six?

Ann: 12.

Chris: 12! Ah man.

Ann: We've had 10 in West Palm so far, and one in San Francisco. So, it'll be our 11<sup>th</sup> in West Palm, 12<sup>th</sup> overall. We're excited.

Chris: That's absolutely fantastic. Do you want to take a second and just kind of talk about anything you want to say about conference, for people that don't know?

Ann: Yeah. We meet in person because people tell me that they really love speaking directly to each other, networking, and finding answers. Everybody comes with information. We have about 16, 17 speakers. We serve only organic food. We focus on vegan and vegetarian options. A lot of local farms donate produce. We do fresh squeezed juicing. We have a yoga class, a free movie night, chi gung. Just a lot of great experiences take place there. And a lot of companies donate their organic products

for us as giveaway items. So, there will be health and beauty aids, dietary supplements, and all sorts of things that make life a little better.

Chris: Yeah. There's only a handful of cancer conferences that are any good, and yours is one of them.

Ann: Thank you.

Chris: And I can tell you that the time I spoke, which was a couple years ago, I mean the people there were wonderful. I made some absolutely great connections. And obviously some people there already kind of knew who I was and all that, so that was great. But yeah, I highly recommend it. If you can make it down to Florida in March, then this is an absolutely great conference. Really, it's the only alternative conference on the east coast, right?

Ann: That's right. And the other thing is, you know, we have to close registration in two more weeks, because we order special organic-only kitchen, during our time at the hotel. There's a free shuttle from the airport that's right by the West Palm Beach Airport, very convenient. There are some hotel rooms left, but get them quickly because Florida fills up and gets very expensive, if you miss the deal.

Chris: Better jump on it. Okay. So Ann, can we talk about your breast cancer story?

Ann: You know, it's a great time to talk, because on January 11<sup>th</sup> I celebrated my 25<sup>th</sup> "cancerversary".

Chris: Awesome.

Ann: I was diagnosed in 1993; I was not quite 45 years old. And you know, I didn't know anybody living with cancer. In fact, as you may have experienced (and some of your listeners might have), people went out of their way to say to me, "Oh yeah, my next door neighbor's sister- oh but she died," or "My coworker's friend- oh but they died.: Thanks, you know, that's really helpful.

Because I was younger, I didn't know anybody living. So, I thought, "This is over." And I was diagnosed on a Thursday, told that surgery was available Monday, and I thought, "This is the worst cancer in the universe." Because my understanding, which was zip, was that you had to wait for surgery. And here it was four days, and I thought, "Oh, this is amazingly bad."

Friday I went to work. Saturday I laid in bed with my husband and lied to him, and said, "Oh, everything's going to be great, don't worry." And on Sunday at 8:00 p.m., I got a phone call from a woman and she said to

me, "You don't know me, but I'm a 10-year cancer survivor." My whole experience changed in that moment.

I didn't even recognize, for a while, that that was such a strong mind/body experience, but it was powerful as could be. To this day, 25 years later, when I say it, I get goosebumps because she really made all the difference for me.

So, my diagnosis was Stage 1 and it was slow-growing, which sounded great. But within 18 months, I got more tumors. I actually had two – one of which I found, and the other one they found during surgery.

Chris: So, hang on though, I want to know more about what this woman said to you when she called. And then, also, did you end up having the surgery right away?

Ann: So, I had a lumpectomy immediately – right after. And like I said, I felt I could survive, so that was doing- I knew nothing about it; I didn't have any questions to ask. I couldn't imagine that the doctor or surgeon would not tell me everything I needed to know. So, I didn't ask anything. I went into surgery unaware. Now, people say, "Oh, but you signed the paper." Well, they make you sign it when you're in your gown with no back. You don't have your shoes, you don't have your glasses, you don't know what's up.

Chris: Right. And you know, who's going to read that anyway?

Ann: Yeah, well, you know. So, I mean, he had said to me, "Lumpectomy, radiation..." In my head, I was saying, "Well radiation, I don't think they can make me do that." Of course, they can't because you're an adult. But I'm an anti-nuke activist from early childhood, so there was no way I would do radiation. But after the lumpectomy, first of all, I didn't sleep for a week because I'm extremely chemically sensitive, and apparently anesthesia just didn't work for me. And I was awake for a week, which is not good; no sleep at all. And then, of course, I crashed.

But I started to think because, "Hey this is not working the way I thought it would. I'm not cured and I don't feel very good now. Everything's messed up. I got lymphedema, right away." And I found out they'd taken lymph nodes, which I didn't even know they did. And apparently that's what I signed, "Oh yeah, take my lymph nodes." So, that was bad. It was a mess.

And then, I went to see an oncologist. You know, sometimes I joke around that if I'd had a sweet, kind, gentle oncologist – I don't know if they exist – maybe I would have thought more clearly. But the doc said to me, as I walked in, "Oh, we'll start you on chemo next week." And I said, "No doc, I have a problem." And he said, "Oh, it doesn't matter." And I said, "No. I really have to tell you what it is before I walk out of the

room." In any case, chemically sensitive – wet paint, wet carpet, cleaning products, people's fragrance, everything bothered me. And I would get really sick. I'd have a dizzy headache for three or four days. I had to lie in bed. I couldn't walk. Sometimes I lost muscle control. And here's this guy saying, "Oh, it doesn't matter." You know, it matters to me.

So, after the second time he said it, I left. I decided I'd better not do chemotherapy because an aspirin makes me feel sick, how's chemo going to work? So, I decided not to do it. And I went into a support group, because I was lucky enough to have breast cancer. But in the support group everybody was like, "Oh no, you have to do something." And I said, "The surgeon said he got it all," which is a classic mistake.

So then, I decided, okay, I was already eating a lot of organic and I was a vegetarian. I said, "I'm going to move this into 100% organic. I'm going to be a vegan. I'm going to take dietary supplements. I'm going to exercise for an hour a day. Everything I could think of..." And because I lived in New York City, I started attending meetings of all sorts of odd interesting things that I knew nothing about.

Of course, I had a good friend who was an acupuncturist. That's the funny thing about alternative medicine; I didn't even realize it was alternative because my good friend Franny was an acupuncturist. She had actually stopped my menstrual cramps two years before, so I had a great respect for Chinese medicine. And working with her and talking to her about things, I realized an amazing thing. She had been a massage therapist, prior to getting her degree. When I would go to her office, sometimes, for a treatment, she would have given someone a massage before. I began to feel better on the days when I smelled the cream she used, which was peppermint scented. So, I realized that peppermint helps me – essential oil. And that was a great way to find out, by experience.

So, the natural world was good to me. Acupuncture was good; finding out about essential oil was great. You know, I'm not into fragrances because of my chemical sensitivity, but peppermint oil changed my whole feeling. So, that was cool. And I tried everything. I had magnets in the bra, when I still had my breasts. And I tried heat over it, I tried creams, I did a lot. But again, it recurred in less than two years, which they said, "Oh, this is bad." But, it turned out to be really slow-growing. Now they tell me, "Oh don't do chemo. Because it's slow-growing, it'll kill normal cells." So, I was like, "Okay, no problem, I won't do it." So, I never did chemo and I didn't do radiation.

I did go through the experience of trying to see what it was like. I was tattooed, I was measured. It was so incompetent that I was afraid to do it. Plus, the whole left side of my body was in the field – my heart, my left lung – and I came from a family of heart disease. And by then, I had gotten smart enough. There was no Internet back then, but I went to a

medical library. I started reading journals and finding out the details that I needed, and talking to people, and sharing information.

I was running a study group that would look at whole health. I just really wanted to get information to save myself. What I found is, every step of the way I found things that kept me well enough to go to the next step – to keep me well enough to go to the next step. I went to a Gerson Clinic, CHIPSA, in Mexico, and I was the healthiest person there. You know, I hadn't done chemo. Most of the people, especially in 1995, were devastated by treatment. They were just really weakened, and I was not.

So, I stayed for two weeks. I was there with my mother, which was great, and we just enjoyed it. We just took the experience and gained as much as we could. I had Candida at the time, which was related to the immune dysfunction and the chemical sensitivity, and that started to get a little bit better. The systemic Candida began to heal from the Gerson program. So, when I went home and I did it for 18 more months, I finally stopped having Candida issues. I stopped having rashes. It was good. But it didn't cure cancer because I subsequently had to have a mastectomy.

Well actually, right before I went, I had a mastectomy. Then I got chest wall tumors, and the doc said, “Oh, you're Stage 4.” No testing at all. I didn't even know they were supposed to do tests. So, it was Stage 4. Then I saw another doctor like a week later, and he said, “Oh yeah, Stage 4.” The first doctor had said to me, which I found astounding, “Well, maybe it went through your body and it's probably a metastatic recurrence.” And I said, “Did you say ‘maybe’? Did you say ‘probably’?” That's what they told me, “It's *probably* metastatic.” I don't know how they do that.

But, okay. So, I didn't want to change anything. I didn't jump into chemo because it was metastatic, because I knew that the chances of it being effective were lower all the time. So, there was no point in my doing that now, after I'd been through so much. And, I just went on trying everything that I could – lots of good ideas, lots of suggestions from people – because now I had established the website for [AnnieAppleseedProject.org](http://AnnieAppleseedProject.org). And I was exchanging information with people worldwide – talking to researchers, talking to patients. It was really a very interesting experience, and everything that people suggested that sounded like, “I might try that,” I tried it. I was an Ann of one – my own laboratory – and I certainly didn't want to talk to other people about ideas, if I didn't examine them myself. Like I said, everything kept me going until the next step.

Eventually though, I had 14 tumors on the chest wall – a few at a time, I had three, two, four. And I went to the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in 1998, and there I met Dr. George Wong, who is a Chinese herbalist. And he said to me, “I think I can help you.” I mean, I didn't know him. But by the time I had the 25<sup>th</sup> tumor, I called him, which was

now April or May. I went to meet with him and he said, "You have to give up everything you're doing, and take my herbs." "Nope, can't do that. I mean I've stayed alive for seven, eight years. Not going to, can't, sorry."

We, of course, agreed that I would do my protocol. So, I took the first dose of herbs – very exciting. He made a special prescription for me in Chinese. I took it to a herb store in Chinatown in New York City. I made the tea. I turned into hives – every inch of my body was covered in hives – so that made me nervous. But my friend, the acupuncturist, wasn't in town. No cell phones in the good old days, so I couldn't reach her. And I went to a dermatologist and got an antihistamine, which turned out I had the bad reaction to...but that's another whole story.

Anyway, three days later, I realized that the chemical sensitivity symptoms – which used to be like a knife in the forehead, a terrible headache, dizziness for days – had changed. Now I had not choking, but throat clearing, I mean minimal to the max. And I wrote down in my diary that the intensity of it reduced by 65%. So, I called that objective and subjective. I mean, symptom changes, that's as objective as you could be. It was a completely different experience. And that was May, June of 1999.

So, I went back to the herbs. I took them for 10 months, and the prescription changed as I got better. I never got any more tumors. And Dr. Wong said to me, "Oh you should stop." I was like, "I don't think I can stop, I don't feel..." you know. So, I took them four more months, and he said to me, "No, you have to stop."

So, the ironic part of this whole thing was that I had an MRI before I started, and I had an MRI when I stopped the herbs. So, I got a call from the doctor who was reading the MRI, and she said to me, "Why would you have an MRI of the chest wall?" That was, like, unusual. So, I told her the story. She said, "I'll call you back." And one hour later, she called me back. She said, "I just don't see anything." Now, for everybody listening out there, you want your doctor to tell you that you're free of cancer. You know, it's great to have a voice on the phone say that everything's gone.

I lived in New York City. My appointment with my surgeon, who was the doctor who followed me because I didn't do chemo or radiation, was September 12, 2001 – you know, that's the day after 9/11. So, no buses, no subways, no taxis, no private cars. I walked to the hospital. I met with her and she said, "Well we're going to give you NDD – no discernible disease." Now, no one's ever heard of that, and I've looked it up many times. There's no such diagnosis. But she said, "Well, you didn't do chemo, you didn't do radiation, we don't know how you're doing, so it's NDD. I don't even have NDD all these years." All right.

So then, she announces it over the loudspeaker and everybody's happy. I go outside and I'm very emotional, so I started to cry. And I'm not an emotional person, but 9/11, you know, so I started crying. And 30 people rushed up and they were hugging me, "Oh we're going to be fine, don't worry." And in my head I'm going, "I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm going to be alive." Which was a surprise, because really I didn't know where this would go. Now looking back, everything's cool.

But several things came up during that time period. I had told the women and men in the group that I ran that we called the Whole Health Study Group, "Whenever you give me a compliment, it goes right to support my immune system." So, that was like an affirmation that I repeated many, many times. Again, not realizing the mind/body connection, but here it was in my life. And over and over again I said, "Wow, this is supporting my immune system. Thank you for that compliment." And I still say that now all these years later, and I think it's true, you know.

Okay, so now I'm free of cancer. But I really can't get out of the cancer world, because I have all this great information and things that I did really worked. In fact, I found two other things that reduced chest wall tumors. One was a high-dose vitamin A protocol that I chose to do in consultation with some other people – a researcher and an MD in Mexico. And that reduced at least two tumors, but then I got others. I also used the Maitake Mushroom D-Fraction, which also reduced the tumor, but I got others. And it wasn't until the total Chinese herbal protocol that they all went away and never came back. So now, that's pretty good.

In the last, I would say, seven or eight years, I have some lumps that appeared across the scar area, which is standard for recurrence. And I had an MRI twice, two years apart – doesn't see cancer. It's my personal belief that it is cancer, but it's so slow-growing now, from everything that I've done. Don't forget it was slow-growing from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> tumor. And now, it's just so slow-growing that it's not life threatening.

Then last year, I discovered CBD oil. And I started putting it topically and these tumors are going away. They're tiny and they're melting. It's taken about five, six months so far. And I'm photographing it, so that I can show the slide show some day of the missing tumors, it'll be really cool. But it doesn't affect my health.

Chris: So, let me ask you, the CBD oil that you're putting on...does it have THC in it? Or is it just pure CBD?

Ann: Yeah, I don't think it has THC in it, at all. And it has some ingredients that ordinarily I probably would not use. But I had it on hand, and I wanted to try it. And I do, from time to time, add frankincense oil to it – a pure frankincense oil – and that's been quite interesting. I don't know if



it's going faster since then, I can't remember really, but I'll look at the photographs at some point. But it's definitely making a difference. That's the thing about the natural world, you know as well as I, it can really help. It can really change your life; it can really impact your health. And to this day, I still do one juice every single morning. I eat as organic as I can, even when I'm traveling – and I travel a lot, go to a lot of conferences to try to share the information. But I bring with me dried fruit, dried nuts, and seeds – all organic. I bring apples; I bring carrots. I shop, if I can when, if I'm in a town or city overnight. I usually buy sauerkraut and humus, and I manage. It's kind of boring in a way, but yeah, I do that.

And I find the supplements that I want to take, I'm still taking. I didn't know about probiotics years ago, but now I love them. And, of course, I still eat a lot of sauerkraut. I love sauerkraut. Right now, I have very spicy kimchi in the house. I love spices. My drink that I make always has turmeric, always has ginger, has all organic ingredients. But I throw in whatever is in the house. You know, if I have beets, celery, any kind of greens, and I juice that. And my husband takes about 1/3 of what I take, because that's the way we roll in my house. I give it to him, he takes it.

Chris: I have great respect for Dr. Wong, as well, and did a consultation with him at the Annie Appleseed Conference a couple years ago. And it was fascinating. So, during the time, can you talk about what your diet and other supplement regimen was like, while you were working with Dr. Wong? Were you still on, basically, a vegan diet?

Ann: Yeah. I was very interested in vitamin C powder. I didn't really know about IV drips. Well I knew about them, but I didn't know where they were available. I had had a couple in Mexico, but I didn't know how to get them in New York City, and I just didn't.

But I was using powder in my water, and to this day I still use vitamin C powder. So, I get about maybe 2 grams a day, but in those days I was doing 15-18 grams. You know they say you have to find bowel tolerance, but that never happened for me. So, I just kept taking it, and that was cool. I take resveratrol. I use green tea capsules, because I don't like the taste of green tea. The only way I can drink is with another flavor, you know, you make accommodations. And I have my vegan program, not like everyone else's, because at a certain point about 20 years ago, I discovered the Budwig Protocol, and I wanted to try it. But I hate cottage cheese, so I found biodynamic quark, and I had that with flaxseed oil. I liked it a lot, and I didn't consider myself a non-vegan because I used it. I'm not into yelling at people for changing their diet. I think you make your program and you have to stick with it, so it's got to be the one you like. So, my program included, 20 years ago, quark.

Last year, I found a raw milk farm near my house, and they have raw milk quark. I was excited to try raw milk because of the probiotics of that. So, right now about, every other month I have about a week where I

eat the quark and flaxseed for my breakfast, instead of what I might have otherwise.

I use brewer's yeast for amino acid, and I have that every day. I supplement B6 and B12. I take a multi. I also use Juice Plus+ fruit and vegetable capsules. I mean, I've got the barn door locked. I have like five or six locks on the door, really. But I believe in that. And I think it's important to have the protocol.

I work out now only 20 minutes a day. I tell people in my talks, I've discovered that even 10 minutes a day can work, if you do jumping, dancing, hopping, "trampolining". I have a vibrating platform. Because of my chemical sensitivity I don't go to the gym because I can't stand the cleaning products; it's just revolting. So, my gym is a hula hoop, a stationary bike, a vibrating platform, a trampoline, of course a yoga mat, a ball (actually mine's a bone because I fall off the ball, so I have a bone).

You know, I do whatever I can, and I do that 20 minutes a day. But like I said, 10 minutes a day could be enough – especially the vibrating platform, 10 minutes a day; or a trampoline 8-10 minutes a day. And that's good for people who just don't feel like it. But as you and I know, if you're fatigued for any reason, exercise actually helps. There's a lot of studies on that.

I remember, years ago, an exercise professional said, "You have to do 60 minutes of vigorous physical exercise a day." And I'm saying, "Barrier, barrier, I can't do that. I'm not going to do that." You know, my husband is a champion athlete. You remember you met him, he was the registrar at the conference, Mr. Appleseed. So, he plays ball three or four hours a day. We never do that. I said to him, "Well, what if you ate organic vegetable, plant-based, and you exercised 30 minutes a day?" and he said, "No." But now, of course, the exercise professionals say 30 minutes a day. I still see and hear "barrier," because most people can't start at 30 minutes a day. And yet, when they do a trial to see if it will work, that's what they do to people, 30 minutes a day. Yeah, it's nonsense.

Our Annie Appleseed Project idea, we call it "three steps for health." The second step is to take a walk. We won't say how long, how far, how fast, because that doesn't matter. Once you start, you'll pick up on it. And it doesn't have to be a walk either. It could be a stationary bike, it could be swimming, whatever, but just to get people going. Step one, by the way, is eating one more fruit and one more vegetable a day. Everyone can do it. I feel like we're more in touch with the people than the researchers are, and the medical community. They've got ideas; they're too rigid.

Chris: Absolutely.

Ann: Yeah, it's a problem for people. Like I said, I hear "barrier," and I'm sure everyone else does too. And that's crazy. Why would you set it up that way? We want people to gently get interested in things.

By the way, my original oncologist told me what I ate didn't matter at all. It didn't matter if I exercised. In fact, he didn't think it was a good idea. He said to me, "Yoga? Are you trying to kill yourself?"

Chris: Okay.

Ann: And he said that my immune system had nothing to do with cancer. So, all those things have been proven wrong. But they were considered alternative, in those days. So, when someone says to me, "Oh alternative, I don't do that," I say, "Well actually, yesterday's alternative is today's therapy, so I wouldn't be so quick to dismiss it." And of course, that's the main reason why I go to the medical conferences I go to, because I want to explain to them, "Hey, you used to think eating was alternative, exercise was alternative. Well hey, it's not."

Because, you know, most people are not going to find you or I; they're not going to meet us. They're going to do conventional stuff. They're going to do surgery, like I did, before they turn around. They're going to have chemo. And I want to help them. So, we have a handout on the website – for example, how to reduce treatment toxicity. And there's a lot of great ideas. But the key thing really is that the sooner you do it, the less toxicity you have.

And today, there was a discussion on Facebook about cardio heart toxicity. After the fact, they can say, "Oh we'll take care of it later." That's nonsense. They can't cure heart disease. If they could cure heart disease, things would be very different. So, it's nonsense. So, I say to people, start as soon as you can. Sure, talk to your doctor, but they don't have an iota of information on nutrition, much less dietary supplements. All they know is pharma doesn't approve it, and that's so limiting.

So, at Annie Appleseed Project we help anybody in any circumstance, because we can. We've gathered the evidence, and shared the evidence, and it's enough to be persuaded. There's so much of it. It's just not an \$800 million clinical trial, the way pharma wants it. It's their playground; they make the rules.

Chris: It's true. You know, it's amazing how powerful, just the latest study on fruits and vegetables, the 10 servings a day can be. I know you're saying to just start with one extra, which is a good start. But 10 servings a day has been shown now to be just absolutely phenomenal for health – for preventing heart disease, cancer, diabetes, premature death. And walking, even just brisk walking up to 30 minutes a day, reduced recurrence of breast cancer by 50% after nine years, in a study on

patients. So, the most basic things you could ever think of, eating more fruits and vegetables and walking more, are some of the most powerful.

And you know, we're just trying to tell people, trying to get them to listen and believe and do it. So, tell me what the woman who called you said to you.

Ann: So, she didn't know me. She said, first words, "You don't know me, but I was told that you have breast cancer, and I'd like to share with you that I'm a 10-year survivor." And my heart just changed, everything changed, because I didn't know it was possible to survive, much less 10 years. And that gave me the impetus to realize that I could survive.

Now, I wasn't petrified about the whole thing. I either thought I would die, at first. And then, I thought, "Okay I'm going to live." And I was calm. I'm not emotional, generally speaking; I'm a pretty calm person. So, I felt like, "This is my opportunity."

Now, in this support group that I joined, were maybe nine other women. And everybody had something to report, and I gathered information like a sponge. I mean, one woman had been pregnant when diagnosed – that was amazing, I didn't know that was possible. One woman's father had breast cancer, and she was told by the doctor, "Oh, it doesn't matter if your father has breast cancer, it's only the mother." And I'm like, "Wait, because I know 23...23 mom and dad. Maybe..." You know, I just didn't understand. And it made me think that – and this is all offence to MD's – some are okay, but most of them are as narrow minded as possible. I just kept hearing these stupid things.

Oh another thing, this woman whose father had breast cancer, she worked in a hospital. She didn't want to reveal it, because she thought she would ostracized by the medical community she worked with. I mean, how's that? Pretty creepy. So, she said that she told her surgeon not to cut the nerve in the arm, which they automatically cut apparently –they sign for that too, without knowing. So, I go back to my surgeon and I said, "Why did you cut the nerve?" And he said, "Well it might develop scar tissue and it might cause a problem." And I said, "So, you cut it just in case?" And now, you have no feeling in a certain area of your body. Why did they do that? I mean it's just crazy.

The whole theory is – you may know about lymphedema and lymph nodes – I think our lymph nodes catch cancer, and they're supposed to. They are part of our immune system, and a very effective part. And when you mess it up, when you take lymph nodes from under the arm (the major place for them), they ruin the lymphatic system for the rest of someone's life. And in their science, they're supposed to measure outcomes, but they never look at that. They're saying, "Oh, did we get all the lymph nodes?" So what? We know they can't get all the cancer. And

when the doctor tells you, "We got it all," which I heard, it's meaningless. Because A) you can't get it all, and B) you can't get it all! It's ridiculous.

Chris: They told me the same thing. And the nice thing is now, I mean, again there have been studies in the last couple of years. One study I'm thinking of in particular was where they realized that cancer starts to metastasize before it's even big enough to be detected on a scan. So, those circulating tumor cells and circulating stem cells leave the primary tumor site before you even know you have cancer. So, it's metastatic at Stage 1; it's already in other parts of the body.

But, usually the immune system can mop up those cells. But in some cases, if your body's a place where cancer can thrive, then those circulating cells find a new place to set up camp and start multiplying.

Ann: So, that's the argument for your and my philosophy of boosting yourself. The stronger you get, the less likely that it will come back. I just talked to a man yesterday who had four different types of cancers. And he said to me that he really wants to change things, because he recognizes that his body is in danger.

Chris: He has four different kinds of cancer?

Ann: He had four different, all different – not metastatic or anything like that.

Chris: That may be a new record.

Ann: I know. He could have the Lynch Syndrome or the VHL or those issues. But yes, it's terrible. But he looked good. So, who knows. But yeah, we only have ourselves to work with, so that's what we have to do.

The story of my tumor growth is that all of them grew slower, and slower, and slower. So, what I was doing was effective. I'm not unique, I'm not special. I'm lucky and I did the right combination of things for myself. But I feel like everyone should work toward that. There's a way to find what will work and to go with it, and I think it's worth experimenting with yourself for that. The problem with conventional treatment, it harms. It helps some people, it harms everybody, and that's a problem. Big problem.

Chris: Yeah, for a lot of people it's helpful in the short term, harmful in the long term. What I love about your story too, I just love the fact that you had the disposition and discipline to just keep doing what you were doing, and not panic and not freak out when you had recurrence. Because you had 25 tumors on your chest wall. I mean, a lot of patients, myself included, if I had had 25 new tumors in my body, I would be freaking out. I would be panicking. I know some people watching or listening to this are dealing with a recurrence right now. And they're really struggling

with fear and anxiety and doubt, and are wondering what to do. And your story is so great because you just didn't let the fear take over.

I'm sure there were days when the worry was something you struggled with. But just the fact that you kept learning and researching and trying new things, that is so important. And you just didn't give up and just say, "Okay, just treat me with whatever, because I give up."

Ann: You know, it's interesting, because I started to feel like I was a laboratory. And I had to find answers. But the scary time for me came when my surgeon said, "If we take any more tumors surgically, you will need a plastic surgeon." Now, I'm chemically sensitive, I can't put anything in my body. I don't have reconstruction for that reason – not just that reason, but that's one part of it. I can't have mesh; I can't have bandaging. I turn into blisters all over the place. So, that was a scary time.

But then Dr. Wong came along at exactly the time that I needed him – another mind/body connection. Things came to me when I needed them. I found things at the right time and they worked. But, again, I'm not special; I just try very hard. But that's why started [AnnieAppleseedProject.org](http://AnnieAppleseedProject.org), so that I can say, "Here's all these things that might help."

You know, for example, I had a catheter put in to get vitamin C drips in Mexico. They only ended up doing two or three. But I had the catheter. I come back to New York, had the catheter, nobody tells me it has to be rinsed out all the time, and this has to happen, or that had to happen. I didn't get sick; my immune system was strong. But eventually, I said, "Oh I should take this out." I could not find a surgeon in New York City who would take it out. 12 doctors said to me, "You have to go back to Mexico; they'll take it out." One doctor said, "You have to go to the Infectious Disease specialist and get treated, before I'll take it out." I said, "I don't have an infectious disease." The 13<sup>th</sup> doctor said, "I'll take it out for you." It took 10 minutes.

Chris: Wow. That's... surprising and not surprising.

Ann: I know. Well, here's another part of it. So, it developed scar tissue. So, I already had lymphedema on this side, and I wore a sleeve for 20 years – now I don't anymore. So, this side I was having trouble, I couldn't lift my arm anymore. And I went to a party Labor Day weekend, many years ago, and these African American women said to me, "Why don't you try cocoa butter? It reduces scar tissue." I go out, I buy organic cocoa butter, I put on three months to the day – no problem, all dissolved.

So, of course, I put that on our website. And people wrote to me from all over the world with their experiences with cocoa butter. Now, we have

social media, and you get immediate feedback on any good idea or discussion, and I love that, I really do.

But all of the ideas, all of the things I tried, I put on the website. I found the research; the Internet is fabulous. Everybody knows [PubMed.gov](http://PubMed.gov). That is the library of medicine, and you get every study – including the articles I've written. I mean, it's amazing the things there. It's very useful.

Some people have doctors they can talk to about the issue and you see excellent feedback. Some people get, “Oh, just do what you're doing, don't tell me,” and some get, “Oh, don't do anything.” If you have a doctor who says, “No, no, no, no,” get a different doctor. That's my advice. You need a doctor who gets you.

Chris: I got to meet and interview your friend Annie Brandt, at the Truth About Cancer Conference – which you were there, too.

Ann: Yes.

Chris: And that was a real treat, because I had never met her, I'd heard about her for years, and she was really fantastic. Just again, the two of you are just like the two most important Ann's in the cancer world.

Ann: Ann and Annie – we love it. We have a song.

Chris: Yeah, and people get confused because your organization's Annie Appleseed, but you're Ann. And she's Annie, and hers is Best Answer For Cancer. But anyway, that's great.

So, I want to be respectful of your time, and I'd just like to ask you one more question. Even though you've already said a lot, what does someone need to know when they're first diagnosed? What is the most important thing you tell people when they say, “Help, where do I start? What do I do?”

Ann: So, I tell people to immediately change your diet. Start reading labels. Don't eat anything with artificial ingredients, artificial flavors, or preservatives. I eat none of that stuff. The second thing is to solicit help from everybody you know. Allow your friends to help you do whatever it is you need to do. I had people cutting carrots for me because I could not do that many a week. Accept help. That's very important.

But also, look on the Internet. Advocate sites and sites like yours are the ones that they should be looking at – people who've experienced it, who are giving good information. I think most of the websites, like WebMD, let's say, has advertising. When a site has advertising, I just can't feel okay about what they're saying, because let's face it, when you get paid, you feel differently about what you talk about. When I talk about any company that comes and exhibits at our conference or gets involved, I

always just say, "Hey, they've been exhibiting at our conference," or "They donate a product," or whatever, so that people understand. Because there's a tiny bit of "Yeah, I like them better."

And so, I tell people, "If you don't like what your doctor said, if you don't feel comfortable, change doctors. Get a second opinion," definitely, very important. Second opinions can be very helpful. Of course, they can differ, which is the point of it, and then you may need another opinion. Or you sort it out with people like you, or people like me, or people like Annie, or other people like us, who are trying to help. And you never give up. There's always another step to take. That I'm sure of. Living proof.

Chris: Absolutely, I agree with that. I love it. Well thank you so much.

Ann: My pleasure.

Chris: Ann this is great. Again, I'm going to put links below this video. And if you're listening on the podcast, I'll put a link in the show notes, where you can find Ann and find out about Annie Appleseed. The website is an amazing resource. It's been going for...when did you start? In '95?

Ann: 1999.

Chris: Okay. So, it's been going a long time. And frankly, I wish I had found it in 2004. I don't know, I just didn't find it. It didn't come across my radar. The Internet was so scattered, and Google didn't work that well back then. I don't know.

Ann: I know.

Chris: But yeah, I wish I'd known about it back then, because I know it would have given me a lot of encouragement and ideas and resources. I was basically going from book to book, which I know that's what you did, too. Just going like from one book, to the next, to the next. I got very little help on the Internet, and there weren't any support groups in Memphis, because it's such a backwater town. But anyway, you can find and connect with Ann on social media and on her site, and find out more about the conference in March. So, I think that pretty much covers it.

Ann: Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Ann. Thanks everybody for watching. See you on the next one.



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