

Cancer survivor Brian Doan gladly accepts his 'Obligation of the Cured'

He tells his story:

"Shortly before I received the final dose (of chemo), Dr. Craig Nichols came by to see me. He wanted to talk with me about the larger implications of cancer. He wanted to talk about the 'the obligation of the cured' ... Cancer could be an opportunity as well as a responsibility. Dr. Nichols had seen all kinds of cancer patients become dedicated activists against the disease and he hoped I would be one of them."

— Lance Armstrong

It seems kind of funny that after one puts strength, faith and all of who they are into their personal battle with cancer that anyone would dare imply that THEY should be obligated to anything or anyone. We survivors are used to the choruses of "take some time for yourself," "sit back and enjoy life now," or my personal favourite, "life is too short for you to worry about the little things."

To tell you the truth, it is easy to sit back and react to "being cured" by feeling like something is owed to you ... after all, you fought the fight and won, so now it is time to enjoy the spoils of victory, no? Yes, but there is one thing you have forgotten.

The Obligation of the Cured.

Back in the late 1990's, Lance Armstrong found out the hard way about the Obligation of the Cured. He spoke about the obligation as part of a motivational seminar that passed through Ottawa on March 6th, 2006. Over 4,500 of us heard how this obligation has changed Lance's direction in life after his recovery. Along with winning seven Tour de France races, Lance has devoted much of the past 10 years recruiting an army of cancer fighters to challenge the fund raisers and law makers to make curing cancer a priority.

However, you don't need to be



Responding to Lance's inspiration.



Lance Armstrong to successfully carry out the Obligation of the Cured. You need to be someone who realizes that it's not all about "taking time for yourself or sitting back and enjoying life now."

After my own battle, I decided that one of the things I simply needed to do was to get back into the shape I was a decade before (having been a recreational cyclist, runner and triathlete since the age of 14, I was no stranger to athletics). I attended a local running store who was offering a clinic that would get me back into the shape I was looking for. Doesn't seem that odd, does it? Well, the longest I had run back in high school was 10 kilometres.

This clinic was geared to prepare

me for my first half marathon. One of my mantras is "GO BIG or GO HOME"! If the average Joe can do it ... it doesn't interest me! If I am going to get that look of "you're gonna do WHAT?", then I realize that I have found my next challenge!

So after I ran the half marathon, I knew a full marathon was inevitable. Each time I found myself in a training group, there would always be an occasion to bring up the reason I ran. It's at this point you start to see the benefits of the Obligation of the Cured. People always react to my story by telling me of someone they know who battled testicular cancer or by telling me they have never met someone who has had it. See, we win either way!

After my first full marathon in Toronto, I decide to kick it up a notch. In the winter of 2005, I asked to be part of the 2005 Dana-Farber Cancer Team and run the Boston Marathon. It was a fundraising team that was mostly comprised of cancer survivors and/or their families. What better an opportunity to share the importance

of cancer, cancer research, survivors' stories and stories of those not as lucky with anyone who will listen?

I held a fundraising dinner and dance with live music and a silent auction that included my own electric guitar that was autographed by Slash, the guitarist from Guns and Roses (sigh!). At the end of the evening and the end of my fundraising campaign, we raised over \$10,000 in less than three months. But more importantly, we raised the awareness of testicular cancer to thousands of people all across Canada and the United States.

If being able to hand over a cheque for \$10,000 going directly to cancer research was not enough to show me how important it is to never satisfy your obligation, running the Boston Marathon with other survivors was. As I ran towards Heartbreak Hill and ultimately the finish line, I would hear the names of runners being called out by their families. I thought it was really supportive of them to stand at the side of the road for all that time, just to say "Way to go!" as they ran past. That was until I realized that I too had supporters. They were the men and women who recognized my team's jersey.

It was the grandparents who were doing all they could to wave as hard as they could. It was the kids, who were obviously going through their second or third rounds of chemo, who were bundled up in a warm blanket as they sat in their chairs, as they were



Training for first Ironman race in Lake Placid.

too weak to stand. As I passed all of these folks, I could only see their mouths saying, "Thank you so much for what you are doing."

I found that sweat certainly can mask tears for 42.2 kilometres!

So, if you ever wonder why someone has chosen to believe in the Obligation of the Cured ... that, my friends is why; why I will run, ride and swim my way toward a world that understands how important it is for us survivors to be out there and be telling everyone they know or even don't know about their battle. Being a Lance fan for many years now, I know it is something that he would do too.

"In July, I hope to complete my first Ironman race in Lake Placid, and can think of no better reason to do another fundraiser. This time, it will be as a thank-you for those that treated me at The Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre."

— **Brian Doan**

Lance may be retired and out of the spotlight, be it won't slow him down. He plans to extend his obligation to other continents like Africa and Asia. Now, with five marathons and a couple of half-ironmans under my belt, it's time to "GO BIG or GO HOME" again.

In July, I hope to complete my first Ironman race in Lake Placid, and can think of no better reason to do another fundraiser. This time, it will be as a thank-you for those who treated me at The Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre.

Got any ideas? Post them on my website ... www.nutsaboutcancer.com



A-Channel goes above and beyond for the community

The Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation welcomes Don Mumford as the new Station Manager for A-Channel. Don is responsible for leading the management team and the day-to-day operations, growth and strategic planning for the station. With over 22 years of broadcasting experience and a proven record of success at CHUM's local stations in Southwestern Ontario, Don is well suited to ensure the continued growth as the local station of Pembroke, the Valley and the National Capital Region.

The Cancer Foundation is honoured to be a regional partner of A-Channel and grateful for their community support of our many local events including: Quest for a Cure Adventure Race, An Evening with Abigail, Astral Fitness Golf



Tournament and the Cancer Foundation Telethon to name just a few.

A-Channel continually goes above and beyond for the community as evidenced by their involvement in the funeral services for fallen firefighter Mark Johnston. When fellow firefighter Jim Andrews made a request to A-Channel to provide electrical feed and speakers to facilitate the viewing of outdoor ceremonies within the church, A-Channel willingly obliged with less than 24 hours notice. There was no charge or recognition requested for providing this community service.

The Cancer Foundation wants to extend our heartfelt thanks to A-Channel for continually bringing our community closer together.