



Colleen Kettenhofen

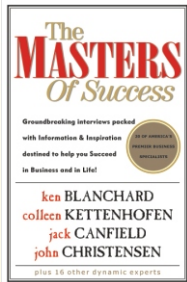
International Speaker, Trainer, Author

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How Cancer Changed My Life and How It Can Change Yours

written by Colleen Kettenhofen

*"Caring about others, running the risk of feeling,
and leaving an impact on people, brings happiness."
Rabbi Harold Kushner*



Colleen Kettenhofen

International speaker,
author and motivator
is to be featured in a
new book called

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In speaking to audiences worldwide, people often ask me, "How did you get into the speaking business?" and, "Tell me about your cancer." The answer is simple. On May 2, 1991, I experienced a wake-up call that would forever change my life. I was diagnosed with stage zero colon cancer. The good news is that through life-altering experiences such as these, we're often forced to find our passion and fulfill our fate. Here's my story, what it taught me and what you can learn from it:

My life in Redondo Beach, CA in 1991 was wonderful. Living in an ocean view town home blocks from the beach, and with a job I enjoyed, there was much reason to feel grateful. In addition, my many friends and I had just celebrated my 31st birthday in March of that same year.

One month later we were all skiing at Mammoth Mountain in California. Having just completed my final ski run of the day, I was feeling happy, alive and energized. It was nearing sunset. Clouds in pink, purple and orange-ish hues filled the sky. The scent of the green pine trees and crisp mountain air was exhilarating.

Two days later, I was sitting in front of the doctor when he said to me, "Unfortunately, Colleen, you've got cancer." My whole body went numb. I told him that since I was handling it well and wasn't in tears, I must be in shock. He winced with empathy, and said, "I think you are." The good news is I was stage zero and never had any chemo or radiation. I was one of the lucky ones.

Having said that, I recently spoke for the 4th annual dinner of a colorectal cancer survivor's group and was shocked at how many patients were under the age of 40. They were not the relatives of cancer patients, but the actual patients themselves. At that dinner, I asked both the patients and their families to write down what they had learned from a cancer diagnosis. Here are some of the things they shared:

"My wife is a cancer survivor and I am now deeply aware of how the birds sing and the flowers bloom."

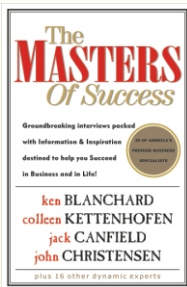
"I have become closer to God. I use my experience to talk to youth. My skies are bluer and my flowers more colorful. I see more to life than others. I have better relationships with others I meet."

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"Life is too special and sometimes too short to worry about the small stuff. We need to have a passion for life. Working in oncology and having a colorectal survivor mother to share my life with is truly a blessing! This disease is preventable! Get screened!"

"I got a colonoscopy and had polyps in my late 20's. I now know that I am not indestructible."

"After being diagnosed with colorectal cancer at age 38, I learned to put myself, my husband and my children ahead of any other obligations. It made me look for God's purpose in my life."

"As the wife of a cancer survivor I find that my sense of what life is all about has changed. My treatment of others (my husband, children, and other people in my life) has become more loving."

"I appreciate life much more and am thankful for each day. I look forward to what life has in store for me."

"Increased awareness of life's potential to change suddenly. I'm reconnected with family members not seen for a long time. Caused my family members to all get a colonoscopy."

"I am a colorectal cancer survivor. I am now so very, very happy and singing praises and helping others. Smile, smile, smile!"

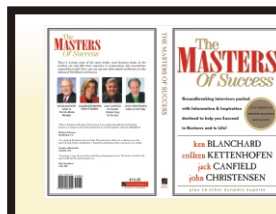
The things that we think are so pressing and urgent often aren't. It's about family, friends, appreciating nature, taking risks and helping others. I hope you will not have to experience a wake up call in order to find your passion and fulfill your fate. Learn from the experiences of others.

March is colon cancer awareness month. Please get screened.
Don't die of embarrassment. It could save your life.

March 26, 2005

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