

A HEALING MIRACLE

**Don Factor's Triumph over
Cancer...20 years later!**

**Dr. Susan Lange, OMD, L.Ac,
Interviewing Don Factor**

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Occasionally we like to post interviews about people who have incredible success stories to share and who can inspire others in their own healing journey. Our dear friend Don Factor came to our wedding over twenty years ago, and two weeks later was diagnosed with a very severe form of cancer and given months to live.



(Easter, 2007 – Don Factor at his pool-side home in Palm Springs)

“There couldn’t be a worse (cancer diagnosis) as far as I know. I later found out when I researched it, that there is no survival statistic for people who had what I had.”

“Basically, what I’d have to tell people (coming from my own direct experience), is that a cancer diagnosis (even one like mine), is not a death sentence. I survived.

It was a death sentence I was given and I didn’t die; which means, if I could do it, if one person can do it - it means someone else can do it. So it isn’t a foregone conclusion.”

Don Factor

Don Factor is the first in our series of “Healing Miracles.” Read his story here:

Dr. Susan Lange, OMD, L.Ac, speaking with Don Factor:

Dr. Susan Lange: So this is April, 6th 2007 at Don Factor's home in Palm Springs hearing Don speaking about his miracle healing from cancer. Don, tell us your story...

Don Factor: Right. I hate to think of it as miraculous, but I guess it was. I've never been much of a believer in miracles, at least not in the conventional sense of what that word means. In 1986 I was diagnosed with small cell carcinoma of the lung, with what I later came to know as distant secondaries. That particular sort of cancer doesn't have the usual sort of stage one, stage two, stage three, and stage four. You either have it with no secondaries or metastasis or you've got it. And my distant secondaries were focused on my liver and my liver was in very bad shape, a lot of it was taken over by the cancer.

I was diagnosed in London by a very high-powered specialist, or so I was led to believe, who later was knighted for his services to medicine. But in any case, after running me through all kinds of tests, he let me know that there was very little they could do for me. When I asked him, "Well, is there anything you can do for me?" they said, "We could give you a course of chemotherapy which might buy you an extra six months. But there's at most a fifty-fifty chance of that working, and it will only buy you a few extra months." So that was quite a shock as you can well imagine.

Dr. Susan Lange: A huge shock!

Don Factor: The news of this came over the telephone because I was living in the country far away from Harley Street where he was, unfortunately. He apologized for having to give me that news over the phone but didn't want me to hang around the hospital any longer than I had to. So anyway, my wife and I looked at each other and I was crying and she was crying. The first thing I did was, I got up, lit a cigarette – I had been a heavy smoker up to that point. I went outside, because in those days she was a non-smoker and so I had to go outside to smoke. I smoked the cigarette, finished it, stubbed it out and said, "All right, that's the end of those!" I've now got to do something about this. I'm not prepared to die.

And so we started figuring out what to do. We knew a lot of people who were involved in alternative things. We'd actually met a man called Dr. Ernesto Contreras who had a clinic just outside of Tijuana in Mexico, who we'd been very impressed with. We'd met him at a conference we'd been involved with helping to organize at the University of Warrick in Coventry.

So we started checking around how to get hold of him again. Talked to some other friends who knew him and knew about him and they organized my being admitted to his

hospital and we very quickly, within five days or six days, I think, after the diagnosis, we were on a plane heading for California.

We were met by some people, part of the spiritual community that we'd been part of in England, met by some of its members there. They took us to a lovely spa called Glen Ivy Hot Springs in Corona where we spent a couple of nights and then someone drove us from there down to Tijuana. By the time I arrived in Tijuana, the mild symptoms that I'd had, which were being, I suppose you'd have to call it kind of liverish – slight “indigestion-y”. I was off my food. It turned out I'd been losing weight, but I thought that was a good thing. I'd also begun to develop a terrible pain in my lower spine which spread down through the sciatic nerve, so I had dreadful sciatica. So by the time I got to the hospital I was in excruciating pain. I was very weak. I could hardly walk. I sort of staggered into the place, went through the initial meetings and exams and got into a bed and wondered where the hell am I, what am I doing here.

But in the meanwhile, in those 5 days, I was searching for books and information; anything I could get to find out what was possible, what it was all about, to learn as much as I could.

I came upon a book by a guy called Bernie Siegel, Dr. Bernie Siegel, who's an American surgeon who had discovered that the work of people like Carl Simonton, of doing psychological work was very important and produced good outcomes for cancer patients. Bernie Siegel's theory was that the most successful patients were what he called, difficult patients; patients who weren't going to treat their doctors like some kind of god, or the conventional wisdom, as being the final answer on anything. So that kind of fit my personality type a bit so I dealt with it on that basis.

Anyway, I started working at this hospital, I mean I really was working at the hospital. I was lying on a bed and people were doing things to me, but I was doing a lot of work. And the work involved visualizing, for instance. They would treat me with various drugs and such. I was watching these drugs or visualizing these drugs going through my blood stream killing the nasty cancer cells. Rather like the old Pac Man game we used to play on the video. Various things like that.

I was in that hospital initially for less than a month (call it four weeks), during which time they gave me a treatment which was a combination of a lot of things that were new to me; Alternatives that I hadn't know about and also orthodox treatments. They gave me chemotherapy. They gave me some radiation to help get rid of this awful tumor that had suddenly turned up on my spine which was giving me excruciating pain. At the same time I was having a total clean out, was put on a very strict vegetarian diet. I was given coffee enemas, vast amounts of vitamin C, vast amounts of other stuff. I can not tell you what it was any longer, but basically minerals and nutritional things. And the basic idea,

the basic theory, which made such perfect sense to me, was that they were not concerned with treating the tumors which they considered to be symptoms; they were trying to treat me, to get rid of the cause or at least cure the cause which was to boost my immune responses, to get me as healthy as possible and at the same time start treating the tumors, as obviously necessary.

This went on and within those three or four weeks I began to be in remission. I still had a lot of cancer and there was still no cure in sight, but I was better than when I went in.

The radiation did work on the very painful tumor, because at one point I said, "There is no point in getting better if I'm going to have to have this pain." First I had to sort of argue with the doctors 'cause they said, "But the life threatening part is your liver." And I said, "Yeah, but who cares, if I'm in such pain!"

So they finally went around to help me get rid of the pain, which took five sessions with radiotherapy, which succeeded. Then we were able to get to work.

I was on this strict diet. They were giving me something called Laetrile which is a very controversial drug. There's a very funny story about that that I'll get to later. Laetrile seemed at one stage, long before my time, to have been the great discovery that was going to be the cure for cancer. And people were very excited about it. Well, it turned out not to be that. However, the Contreras family, at their clinic, they found it to be really a useful part of the whole treatment. For one thing, it seemed to reduce a lot of the side effects of chemotherapy. But no one else wanted to listen to that because it was already so rubbished by people who had never done any direct research on it. There'd been some animal research but never any human studies on it, at least not up to that time. And great fear of it because the basic chemical ingredient was a cyanide compound. The word cyanide frightened everyone; they didn't want to feed their patients cyanide.

I'll tell you briefly the story. Later, long after I was better, my wife and I were invited to speak at a nursing conference in; I believe it was in Torquay, in the South West of England. I sort of told my story, and they were interested in her story because she was my primary "caregiver" during this whole thing. I wouldn't be here really; she was as important to this whole cure as anything else. But I told the story about the Laetrile and it was well received. And there were mostly nurses there, but there were a few doctors – which impressed me that a few doctors took the trouble to come and listen to this very strange, unorthodox story.

After, we were standing around having tea or something following the talk, someone came up who wanted to introduce me to a woman who was a professor of pharmacology at Exeter University, in England. I turned around to smile, to shake hands with her. She didn't shake hands with me. She shook her finger at me and said, you must never go anywhere near that Laetrile, it's deadly poison. And I looked at her and

said, but I've been taking it intravenously, I've been taking it by mouth, every which way for months and months and look it hasn't poisoned me. She didn't respond at all to that. She just looked at me again, shook her finger and said, "Stay away from that stuff, it's dangerous!" and turned around and walked away. It was most remarkable. It gave me a picture that this is the way the profession operates; with that kind of inability to look beyond their own belief systems. So I was very lucky to have done what I did.

Dr. Susan Lange: So I remember, it was a long time ago in Santa Monica and you came to visit us and you were sitting there telling your story. I was so fascinated and you said when you arrived from England and you just soaked up the sun, you could feel the sun getting into you. And you want to take over for me...

Don Factor: Yeah. I mean what happened is, I was lying in a hospital bed, walking around with – I thought it was like my pet because it was an IV thing that was stuck in me. And carrying this thing around, or letting it; the thing that was hanging from wheels, sort of following me around like my pet animal, my pet.

And we noticed that the hospital, in those days, Contreras Hospital was a very small place. It sort of looked like a run down motel in of all places, Tijuana.

Dr. Susan Lange: How inspiring, confidence-wise.

Don Factor: Well indeed. But it had a little courtyard with a little grass lawn and I suddenly realized I wanted to go lie in the sun. So Anna, my wife Anna, arranged to get something I could lay on, on the grass, a cushion. So she got me out there and I laid down and I just basked in the sun. And it was absolutely wonderful and so healing.

And no one else seemed to be making use of this little courtyard. There were lots of patients there, but no one else. I suppose, this was before we had all been taught how the sun is our enemy. I mean, something I'd never taken too seriously.

Dr. Susan Lange: No. No. You let your intuition tell you.

Don Factor: I did indeed.

Dr. Susan Lange: And what I've noticed, every time I hear you tell your story, is the way you took charge. You know, like Bernie Siegel says, you were one of these people who were not willing to give up, or listen, or believe what other people were telling you and you brought in all kinds of therapies. It wasn't just being, "fixed by the radiation and chemo." You did a lot of other stuff.

Don Factor: I mean the cleansing, the detoxification program which was probably the most extreme treatment I had, which was this very boring, very bland vegetarian diet.

Dr. Susan Lange: Didn't your wife do it with you? She did everything that you did?

Don Factor: She was with me. No, I think she went around and ate the food that the hospital staff ate... nice, good Mexican food, which I was very jealous of.

I had coffee and it was twice a day. That apparently does something to open the bile ducts and help relieve the, whatever is stuck up in the gallbladder.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes

Don Factor: I was happy to go along with anything like that. I figured anything that was not outright harmful; I was prepared to go along with.

And what else? They were giving me vast amounts – they were giving me 60 grams of Vitamin C intravenously everyday. And that was in; I can't remember how many hours it took. They'd give me the Vitamin C, this huge amount of Vitamin C intravenously and then I would get some alkaline – whatever, I can't think of the word now, the term – but something to compensate for the acidity of that. And also mineral, it contained mineral. So I was getting these IV treatments.

They'd actually, since those days, they're doing much more sophisticated stuff like oxygenating the blood and doing all kinds of things that they didn't have in those days. This was all fairly basic. And then the chemotherapy. And the atmosphere. I mean the whole staff. In this hospital, I was never quite certain who my doctor was 'cause I would be seen by all these different doctors. And then they explained to me that they worked together. Every morning the doctors in the hospital would meet together and review all the cases and discuss them and then come up with a kind of consensus through their dialogue. And then they would come and then decide what would happen the next day. They were making it up as they went along, but obviously in an informed way.

And one day one doctor came and said one thing to me and then about half an hour later another one of them came and said something quite different. So I said but I can't remember the names now, but, Dr. so-and-so said this and now you're saying something different. He said, "Oh really, I wonder why he said that, hmm, hang on." And then he disappeared and came back in about 20 minutes and said, "Ah yes, I think his idea is better. We'll go his way." And I said, "My god, this could never happen to me in an American hospital or a British hospital." Yeah. They'd be furious with each other if they were stepping on each others toes. These guys really work together beautifully.

Dr. Susan Lange: Fascinating

Don Factor: And they were a very spiritual outfit. They were all very religious. The Contreras are Evangelical Christians. But they never pushed it. They had a chaplain in the hospital who I met once or twice; very nice guy. We never talked about religion at all. No one tried to convert me. I did go along once to their church service because it

seemed a good way to spend a Sunday when nothing else was happening, but I was in such pain I couldn't stay long. They were sweet, lovely people. I mean the good side of Christianity. You know, they represented totally what Christianity was about. Not the stuff you hear about nowadays. So that was a change of meaning that I experienced down there.

Dr. Susan Lange: Well, speaking of change of meaning. I remember you telling me something that was very significant for you when you were just lying there and your family came to visit you and you got something really important. Do you remember what that was?

Don Factor: Oh, yes.

Dr. Susan Lange: Oh, Yes?

Don Factor: Well, I thought that I was still a goner. I was only a couple of weeks into this, or less than a couple of weeks into it. My father lived in Los Angeles and I had two children from my first marriage who lived there too. So we thought that maybe, if I was going to die quite soon, and I expected that was a likelihood, I ought to really see them and clear my own unfinished psychological business there. 'Cause I knew that they had a lot of resentment. I went through a rather nasty divorce and I was rather estranged from them. I'd seen them and spent time, but there was always a slight, you know, sense that I got from them that I'd abandoned them. And I probably felt that I had, too. And so I wanted to see them, see the kids, who were then teenagers, to say, "Look you know I love you. I mean I really feel bad and I really want to say this and have a talk with you now because if you still carry around any resentment of me and I'm dead it's going to be very difficult for you to clear that because I won't be around to talk to. You're going to have to go to some therapist to deal with it." And they settled up to me and shrugged as teenagers would.

But having got this off my chest and just actually say, "I really love you, I didn't mean whatever pain I caused you, I'm sorry." And it was such a pleasure to say that. I would never ever have had such a conversation if I didn't think I was going to die within a week or two, or sooner. And then I had my father come down quite separately and... and actually my ex-wife brought those kids down so I had a similar talk with her, you know...

Dr. Susan Lange: Oh, yes?

Don Factor: ...and cleared a lot of that, and it was getting rid of, sort of... and then I did it with my father and then I felt that a huge weight had suddenly been lifted from me. I really felt good for the first time in many months, physically and mentally. And the doctor came in and said, how are you doing and I said, I think I've gone into remission. I think I

want those tests run again tomorrow because I think something magical has happened from all the... And he laughed. He said, "Look you've only been here a little, we only did the test a week ago. So you know, give us another week, O.K.?" So, O.K, the next week I had gone a bit into remission. I mean quite a bit into remission. They were quite thrilled.

Dr. Susan Lange: Wow!

Don Factor: And from then it was kind of uphill all the way. I mean it was still a lot of work to be done, and I wasn't out of the woods.

Dr. Susan Lange: Well, what was it that inspired you to clear your unfinished business? How did you know that you needed to do that?

Don Factor: Very simply. I thought I was going to die.

Dr. Susan Lange: It was an inner wisdom.

Don Factor: Yes, in a sense. You know, you've got to get this out because you don't want to die with it in. Now what that meant, why, you know, in the analytical sense, I can't tell you. It was an intuition. It was the final thing. I needed to cleanse the pallet. It was like, no thoughts about life after death, or heavens and hells and that kind of thing; nothing at all. The only thing that changed about me regarding death was I wasn't afraid of it anymore. It seemed to me that it might not be such a bad thing...(inaudible)...and I never got beyond that. I still wonder about it. I still wonder if there's any sort of post-life, post-bodily death; but I guess I'll find out when the time comes.

Dr. Susan Lange: And then you were talking about – then you went uphill. From then on you just went uphill?

Don Factor: As I said one of the things I had to do is they had a system. They wanted to administer the treatment in a way that was very unorthodox. I'm thinking now of chemotherapy. To avoid the two things to avoid – the terrible stress on the body of injecting lots of poisons into the blood stream. They wanted to implant a catheter called a Hickman Catheter into my liver. That was the place where they were most interested in getting the cytotoxins, as they're known technically, to work because that was the most life threatening bit. So I had to have a small bit of surgery and they installed this thing with a piece of plastic tubing coming out my belly button and with a little injection cap on the end so they could inject anything into that, rather than into my arms where it would have to flow through my whole body and poison everything on its way to where it was needed. And I thought that was a brilliant idea.

Dr. Susan Lange: Very brilliant.

Don Factor: And I asked about it. I said, you know it was really terrific. Why isn't anyone else doing it? And they said, well actually we got the idea from a doctor in Birmingham who was doing it for patients and then a few years ago stopped doing it, and we couldn't find him. We couldn't find any reason why he'd quit. They asked me, if I got back to England, and was feeling up to it, could I try to track it down for them – to find out. And I couldn't. I never got through to him, but I talked to some other people and they said simply it wasn't cost effective. 'Cause you had to – someone required a full anesthetic, a proper operation. I mean a minor operation. And it simply wasn't cost effective. So, they, being on a national health system, they couldn't do it anymore. Now they do that. I mean now it's all changed. They have these funny high tech things that they put on people's chests that do the same sort of job. In those days chemotherapy was something. They took a hypodermic needle and injected into the vein in your arm.

Dr. Susan Lange: Right. Right.

Don Factor: But the other thing too, during that same upward phase, I had met a guy in California who was a psychotherapist, a hypnotherapist, who'd studied with Carl Simonton and had some very interesting ideas. He wanted to come down and offer his services free of charge. Well I couldn't say no to that.

Dr. Susan Lange: No.

Don Factor: He gave me a kind of hypnotic induction which was more like a guided imagery sort of thing. But what it involved was making me aware of something called Ultradian Rhythms, which I'd never heard of before. Ultradian Rhythms are sort of a body rhythm that involves the brain, the chemicals of the brain, the neurotransmitters. It involves the immune system. It involves much of the biology of the body and it sort of goes anywhere from a ninety minute to a two hour cycle. And during the course of that two hour cycle, or ninety minute cycle (it's different in different people), there's about a 20 minute period when things are quite low, when the whole system goes quiet. And that's the period when it is actually doing its healing work on the body on a regular basis. But if we don't know about it we can't honor it. We can't give it that chance. But most of us have been taught to just override those. You're feeling a little, you know, you're mind is wandering a little bit or you really would like to go to the toilet or end this conversation or have a smoke or something. He said, "But watch this because you'll see it happens every couple of hours, every 90 minutes to 2 hours." And I watched it, and he was right.

And so it also made something clear to me because I was doing an awful lot of internal work... and struggling. You know; I have to keep the will to live, I've got to fight this thing, I don't want to die, I don't want the cancer to win. And then there'd be times when I just got totally fed up and exhausted and say, you know, this is ridiculous and I'm just

happy to turn my face to the wall and call it a quits. And then I'd have to pull myself out of that and think, "Well, this is some awful part of me that wants to die and I'm not going to let it win."

And then I realized that basically this was a natural thing; that this was part of that Ultradian Rhythm. It was a time when I was supposed to keep my conscious mind out of the act and let the body get on with what it needed to do.

Dr. Susan Lange: And this is what is so important that isn't taught in Western medicine. That you have to follow those periods of expansion and contraction and that that really is helping your healing. And it's not all about just fighting, it's about that balance. You do your inner work and you do your outer work. It's fantastic that you got that information.

Don Factor: Yeah, it was. It was very fortuitous. Was it a miracle? You know, it's not coincidence. What's the word that Jung and Pauli called it?

Dr. Susan Lange: Synchronicity.

Don Factor: Synchronicity. Yes.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes, and not just Synchronicity. You had such a clear will to live that you drew in all the right information that you needed to support you in your healing journey.

Don Factor: I suppose, yes.

Dr. Susan Lange: You did.

Don Factor: I had a friend who told me that she was getting her whole church healing group to pray for me. And then this spiritual group that I was part of, they did a kind of distant healing which they called attunement. And they had me on that program. So they were doing that for me at a distance. And one of their attunement people actually came and visited me quite regularly and did a kind of healing for me. And so I mean, between the whole thing; whatever I was doing and whatever they were doing and whatever the doctors were doing – it all seemed to work. And only later did I find out that the people in Mexico called me their miracle because they didn't think I was going to make it. They'd never seen anyone who was in the shape I was survive. And that was 20 years ago.

Dr. Susan Lange: And I remember that you said that when you walked in they really didn't think they could help you.

Don Factor: Yeah.

Dr. Susan Lange: And you did turn everything around.

Don Factor: Well someone, something turned it around; someone, something.

Dr. Susan Lange: Something, yes.

Don Factor: Somewhere, up there, down here. I don't know.

Dr. Susan Lange: Well, we always teach our patients, and in our workshops, we teach healing is a team sport and it's all about support. And you drew in your support team and your wife and your family and the doctors. You just allowed that support and you did your own work as well.

Don Factor: I mean, I think it's essential. I don't know if it would work again. I don't know if it would always work, but it certainly was the only way I could think to get to where I wanted to do, which was stay alive and get healthy again.

Dr. Susan Lange: And here you are, what, twenty-one years later?

Don Factor: Yeah. '86, November, 86, well twenty-and-a-half years.

Dr. Susan Lange: Great. Don, what would you like people to take away from this interview that will really inspire them?

Don Factor: Basically, what I'd have to tell people, which comes from my own direct experience, is that a cancer diagnosis, even one like mine, is not a death sentence. I survived. It was a death sentence I was given and I didn't die; which means, if I could do it, if one person can do it, it means someone else can do it. So it isn't a foregone conclusion.

Dr. Susan Lange: Excellent.

Don Factor: I said it more complicated that time...

Dr. Susan Lange: No, no that's great.

Don Factor: ...than the first time.

Dr. Susan Lange: You said it great and basically you were given a really bad diagnosis.

Don Factor: Yeah, I mean, there couldn't be a worse one as far as I know. I later found out when I researched it, is that there is no survival statistic for people who had what I had. And for those people who say, well maybe it was misdiagnosed, in Mexico, when they opened me up to put this catheter in me (he told me later), he said he also went

down and took a little nip out of my liver to check the diagnosis and he said they confirmed exactly what the London doctors had given.

Dr. Susan Lange: So you had a double diagnosis and you still emerged victorious. So that's a huge inspiration for anybody listening to this.

Don Factor: I mean the doctors found it inspiring, which was good.

Dr. Susan Lange: Exactly.

Don Factor: You know it gave them hope that maybe they can do more than they thought they could do.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes, yes.

And I hope they also realize that you played a huge part. You were the leader of this whole journey.

Don Factor: As long as I know that.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes, as long as you know that. Well, congratulations. It's a wonderful, wonderful miracle story. Thank you.

Don Factor: Thank you and whoever else.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes, great.

Don Factor: A lot of people, in levels and things were involved in it I'm sure. More than I can even begin to know.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes, yes, and we're just all so grateful that here you are to tell the story.

Don Factor: Yes...indeed...indeed...especially.

Dr. Susan Lange: Yes. Thank you Don.

Post Script:

Susan and her husband, Julian, had a very pleasant stay with Don and his lovely wife Anna in Palm Springs last year - nearly thirty years later!