

SHINING BRIGHTLY by Howard Brown

EXCERPT

Basketball is a lot more than just a game to me. Basketball is a cerebral sport, a community sport, a sport of relationships, respect, chemistry and teamwork. Each time I have been knocked down by a physical disability, a surgery or a chemo series, one of the goals that gets me out of the bed each morning is getting back onto the court as a milestone in the healing of my mind, body and soul. I've had a chemo port installed, neuropathy, chronic diarrhea and the foggiest that I call chemo brain—and I've played through all of that. I don't know too many stage IV cancer patients who've kept playing before, during and after treatment.

It's hard playing full-court basketball several times a week with all that running, zigging and zagging. It's even risky. I sometimes worry that a hard hit to the chest might disturb my chemo port. This is simply a part of my healing journey. The blueprint to my own survivorship. Basketball was the light that got me through some of the darkest periods of my life. And that's the story behind that little photo caption that keeps bouncing around the internet: "I, Howard Brown, Stage IV Colon Cancer and now No Evidence of Disease (NED), celebrate survivorship by going to my happy place: the basketball court!" No, I'm not trying to convince you that you have go out and shoot hoops. Maybe some people will be prompted to get out on the court again after reading this chapter. Most won't. The whole point of this chapter is to tell you about my "happy place." We each need to find at least one of those for ourselves. My happy place is anywhere I'm playing with my hoops with my boyz. What's your happy place?