

This short article/excerpt from Dawn's book Making Friends with Cancer originally appeared under "Words of Hope & Inspiration" on the website, Journey of Hearts: A Healing Place in Cyber Space™ in 1998. New photographs by Barry Barankin, Dawn Nelson

## Making Friends with Cancer

Dawn Nelson

Shortly after I was diagnosed with cancer, I made a decision. All the images I had heard about fighting cancer, doing battle with cancer, beating it and conquering it, did not really resonate with me. Though I was committed to doing whatever was necessary to regaining my health, I felt the need to find more positive ways of viewing my situation and to support my healing process. It was not okay with me for the lingering cancer cells to stay in my body and I began taking steps to get them out; yet it did not seem useful to me to see my cancer as an enemy. Since it had come to visit, I wanted to learn all that I could from it and, for me, that meant finding some way to make friends with my cancer. This is the way I found.

**You make friends with cancer** by heeding its call to consciousness, by letting it change your life. You slow down. You pay attention. You stop doing things you don't really want or need to do. You prioritize. You pace yourself. You respect your body. You spend time with those whose presence is healing.

**You make friends with cancer** by noticing the small miracles that occur daily-- the chorus of bird songs in the morning air, the intoxicating fragrance of one pink rose, the melody of raindrops, the heart melting



sweetness of your children's smiles, the eternity of an ocean wave, the



exquisite beauty of a setting sun, the presence of your beloved--which, before cancer, you may have overlooked or been too "busy" to enjoy or appreciate.

**You make friends with cancer** by letting love in. You open your heart. You tell the truth. You ask for help. You accept the profound generosity of friends. You let whatever you may have given return itself to you.

**You make friends with cancer** by allowing it to remind you of what is actually important in life and what is less so, by forging a relationship with it that fosters new insight, by seeing the uninvited guest as an opportunity for learning and growth.

**You make friends with cancer** by accepting the myriad gifts and joys which life offers. You don't waste time complaining about things you cannot change or which you wish were different. You dance when you can, you weep when you must. You notice what you have instead of what you don't have. You practice gratitude, and forgiveness.

**You make friends with cancer** by not hiding from it or hating it, but by acknowledging it, accepting what it has to teach you and continuing on your Journey, one step at a time.

