

THE BIG IDEAS

Radical Remission

Defined.

#1 Key

Radically change your diet.

Patient vs. CONQUEROR

Choose wisely.

Symptoms vs. Systems

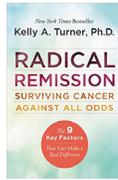
And moldy basements (/kitchens).

Epigenetics

Stand above your genes.

Calling + Purpose

What's your reason to live?



Radical Remission

Surviving Cancer Against All Odds

BY KELLY A. TURNER · HARPERONE © 2014 · 320 PAGES

“When it comes to cases of Radical Remission, we may not yet be able to understand why these people healed from cancer or why their techniques worked for them but do not always work for others. However, I firmly believe that if we put intense effort into studying these cases—instead of just ignoring them because we cannot explain them—then two possible outcomes will occur: at the very least, we will learn something about the body’s ability to heal itself, and at the very most, we will find a cure for cancer. Neither of these outcomes can occur, however, if we continue to ignore cases of Radical Remission. After all, where would we be if Alexander Fleming had ignored the mold in that one petri dish? As history has shown us studying anomalies is not an unproductive use of time. On the contrary, studying anomalies has historically led to tremendous breakthroughs—and that’s where *real* hope lies.”

~ Kelly A. Turner from *Radical Remission*

This is the seventh Note we’ve created on books specifically on cancer. (I’m sharing the sequence again so people can go through them in the order I studied them as the wisdom from each builds on the prior.)

We started with [Anticancer](#) then [Tripping over the Truth](#) then [The Metabolic Approach to Cancer](#) then [Cancer As a Metabolic Disease](#) then [Keto for Cancer](#) then [Outside the Box Cancer Therapies](#). And, now this brilliant (and bestselling) book that I *highly* recommend. (Get it [here](#).)

Kelly Turner is one of the world’s leading researchers and psychotherapists in the field of integrative oncology. She got her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley (one of the best graduate programs out there) studying the remarkable stories of people who were told they had a limited amount of time to live and then RADICALLY defied those odds.

In fact, she’s studied over 1,000 (!) case studies of what she calls “Radical Remission.” In the book, she shares the nine “*key factors that can unlock your pathway to dramatic healing.*”

One of my favorite parts of the introduction to the book is a story Kelly shares about a man who had a Radical Remission and she wondered, “How is this not front-page news?”

Imagine someone who’s told he’s going to be dead in x period of time who then goes on to live for 10x that time (and continues to live). Why aren’t we putting that guy (or gal!) on the front page of our newspapers and trying to figure out how that’s possible?!

Alas, that’s precisely what Kelly has dedicated her life to and what this book is all about.

(btw: Kelly also wrote the brilliant foreword to [Nasha Winters’ The Metabolic Approach to Cancer](#). Nasha has led the nutrition component at Kelly’s Omega Institute retreats.)

The book is PACKED with Big Ideas and, even more importantly, SUPER (!!!) inspiring (goosebumps) stories of normal people like you and me who “*have defied a serious or even terminal diagnosis with a complete reversal of the disease.*”

“The greatest mistake in the treatment of diseases is that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, although the two cannot be separated.”

~ Plato

I'm excited to share a few of my favorite Ideas so let's jump straight in!

RADICAL REMISSION: DEFINED

*"anomaly / noun:
Something that deviates from
what is standard, normal, or
expected."*

~ Kelly A. Turner

"I define Radical Remission as any cancer remission that is statistically unexpected, and those statistics vary depending on the cancer type, stage, and medical treatment received. To be more specific, a Radical Remission occurs whenever:

- a person's cancer goes away without using any conventional medicine; or
- a cancer patient tries conventional medicine, but the cancer does not go into remission, so he or she switches to alternative methods of healing, which *do* lead to a remission; or
- a cancer patient uses conventional medicine and alternative healing methods at the same time in order to outlive a statistically dire prognosis (i.e., any cancer with less than 25 percent chance of five-year survival).

Although unexpected remissions are rare, thousands of people have experienced them. I ask all oncologists I meet if they have ever seen a case of Radical Remission in their practice; so far, each one has answered yes. I then ask if they took the time to publish the case, or cases, in an academic journal; so far, each one has answered no. Because of this, we will not know how often Radical Remissions truly happen until we create a systematic way of tracking them. To help accomplish that goal, this book's website—RadicalRemission.com—allows cancer survivors, doctors, healers, and readers like you to submit quickly and easily your cases of Radical Remission, which can then be counted, analyzed, and tracked by researchers. This database is also freely searchable by the general public, so cancer patients and their loved ones can read how other people with similar diagnoses managed to heal against all odds."

Radical Remission. There's our definition.

Know this: THOUSANDS (!!!) of people have experienced Radical Remission. Every oncologist Kelly has ever spoken with has experienced AT LEAST one case.

And yet, not one of them has submitted the case study to an academic journal—which, although understandable given their workload, is unfortunate given a) the inspirational impact simply knowing about all these exemplars would be for other individuals; and, b) the wisdom we can gain by aggregating this data into a meaningful collection of replicable protocols.

When I read that passage, I immediately thought of two luminaries in positive psychology: [Ellen Langer](#) and Albert Bandura.

*"He who has health, has
hope. And he who has hope
has everything."*

~ Thomas Carlyle

In *Mindfulness*, Langer tells us we need to focus on "the psychology of possibility." She uses Roger Bannister and his sub-4-minute mile as a case study. It was IMPOSSIBLE to do what he did. Until he did it. Then, once he shattered the idea of its impossibility, suddenly, a bunch of people could do it and now high school runners break the 4-min mile.

Then we have Albert Bandura. He's basically the godfather of the science of confidence—or what's known as "[self-efficacy](#)" in science speak. One of the key ways to jack up your self-efficacy? See someone else do what you want to do.

That's why I LOVE (!) this book and Kelly's Radical Remission exemplars. If they can defy the odds, so can we.

btw: There are NINE "Key Factors" Kelly has identified. Each gets its own chapter.

Here they are: "*Radically changing your diet; taking control of your health; following your intuition; using herbs and supplements; releasing suppressed emotions; embracing social support; deepening your spiritual connection; and having strong reasons for living.*"

#1 KEY: RADICALLY CHANGING YOUR DIET

*"Let food be thy medicine and
medicine be thy food."*

~ Hippocrates

"Hippocrates, the Greek physician who is heralded as the founder of modern medicine, strongly believed that food has the power to adjust, rebalance, and heal the body. Imagine, then, his disappointment if he were to find out that today's M.D.'s receive a total of only *one week* of nutrition education during their four years at medical school. ...

If doctors were to study nutrition in greater depth, they would find that we are indeed what we eat, because the cells of our food get broken down and transformed into the cells of our bodies. In addition, what we eat and drink directly affects our vessels and tissues, making them more or less inflamed depending on what we put into our bodies. To understand this concept, imagine giving a cup of coffee to a five-year-old. After about ten minutes, you would have no doubt that what we eat and drink directly affects our health."

Welcome to the first "Key Factor" featured in Chapter #1: "Radically Changing Your Diet."

Take a moment to imagine that five-year-old ten minutes after you give him or her a cup of coffee. Did that coffee have an immediate, direct impact? Of course it did.

To pretend otherwise is just silly.

Now, imagine your cancer cells ten, twenty, thirty, sixty minutes after you give them a can of soda or a box of candy. Then repeat that bomb all day every day with the added sugar, processed foods, etc. Did that sugar bomb and those processed foods have an affect on your cancer cells? Of course they did.

To pretend otherwise is just silly.

And, to use the metaphor loosely: If we could sneak inside your body at a microscopic level, we might just see the same level of hyperactivity in your cancer cells post sugar bomb that we saw in that five-year-old post coffee.

Which makes you wonder how it's possible that your oncologist can say that nutrition doesn't matter while offering candy on your check-in and a soda while delivering chemo.

(Which is why the picture of this "[POP IS FOR PATIENTS ONLY PLEASE THANK YOU!](#)" note in this chemo room both haunts me and challenges me to play my part in helping us conquer cancer.)

Alas, again, your doctor has had a week of nutrition in his or her ENTIRE medical education.

You don't need to think about that for more than 5 seconds (at least I don't) to scratch your head and say, "Really? Maybe that's a contributing factor to why we're losing the war on cancer."

Strategically, we want to know that nutrition matters. A LOT.

Tactically, I highly recommend Nasha Winters' *The Metabolic Approach to Cancer* and [Miriam Kalamian's Keto for Cancer](#) for the nuts and bolts on what science is showing is most effective in using nutritional interventions to rehabilitate damaged energy metabolism.

P.S. Important note: In terms of the diet recommendations Kelly offers in the book, I'm 100% on board with the elimination of sugar and processed foods. And, as I said in the intro, Kelly wrote the foreword to Nasha's book and Nasha has led the nutrition portion of her workshops on Radical Remission so I HIGHLY recommend following Nasha's more nuanced nutritional guidance!

PATIENT VS. CONQUEROR

"The word 'patient' comes from the Latin word *pati*, which means both 'to suffer' and 'to allow' or 'to submit.' In today's world, medical patients are not necessarily expected to suffer, but

*"Cancer cells behave
differently than healthy
cells do, and one of the key
differences is that they
require lots of sugar in
order to function. Therefore,
cutting refined sugars out of
your diet may be a key way to
help 'starve' a cancer cell."*

~ Kelly A. Turner

"In other words, whenever researchers take a closer look at Radical Remission survivors, they discovered the survivors all took control over their health and became very active in the decision-making process."

~ Kelly A. Turner

they are expected to allow or submit. Having worked as a counselor at various hospitals and oncologists' offices, I know firsthand that the patients who listen and follow instructions are considered 'good' patients, while the 'annoying' patients are those who ask a lot of questions, bring in their own research, or—worst of all—challenge their doctors' orders. Such patients are labeled annoying because most of the world still operates from the Newtonian mind-set of medicine, where doctors are seen as the only 'mechanics' who know how to fix the 'machine' of the body when it breaks down.

Radical Remission survivors approach healing from a different perspective, where taking control of your healing is not only considered good but is actually essential for the healing process. From what I have learned, taking control of your health involves three things: taking an active (versus passive) role in your health, being willing to make changes in your life, and being able to deal with resistance."

This Idea struck me like a lightning bolt when I first read it.

I never knew what the word "patient" literally meant. Did you?

To recap: The word "patient" comes from the Latin word *pati* which literally means "to suffer" and "to submit" or "to allow"?

REALLY? Pause. Reflect. Wow.

Then I thought to myself, "OK. What's the *opposite* of 'submitting' to something?"

Then it hit me. The opposite of meekly *submitting* to something is to CONQUER that thing. As in, to CONQUER cancer. Not submit to it. To CONQUER it. Period.

Then, for whatever reason, I thought of the best-selling cancer book *The Emperor of All Maladies*. From what I've heard of this 571-page book, it's a beautifully written book by a brilliant (and earnest) Rhodes Scholar/MD who practices at one of the leading institutions in the world. It is, essentially, a biographical history of our struggle against cancer with, essentially, cancer as the protagonist.

To put it bluntly: It's about the Emperor-Cancer CONQUERING US as we weakly submit to its authority. I don't buy that storyline.

I'll read the book at some point but I haven't read it yet as I've been more focused on helping my brother (and you) *conquer* cancer than paying homage to cancer's ability to conquer us.

Part of a longer philosophical chat but if you and/or your family are fighting cancer, I HIGHLY recommend you start with the shorter and more practical intellectual overview: *Tripping over the Truth*. The main difference? *The Emperor of All Maladies* is written from the perspective of a "genetic theory" of cancer. Guess what? From that vantage point, we LOSE the battle and submit to cancer's infinitely complex wrath. But... When we look at it from the metabolic theory (a la *Tripping over the Truth*), WE assume the role of Emperor and conquer cancer.

Ahem. Back to this idea. It's from Chapter #2 which is all about "Taking Control of Your Health."

It's REALLY (!) important we don't just "submit" to the doctor's orders. Which, frankly, I'd actually be willing to do if what they did was a truly integrative, effective solution that delivered the most healing benefit with the least quality of life cost. But IT DOESN'T.

Ahem again. Kelly unpacks three basic ideas in this chapter: 1. Be ACTIVE rather than passive; 2. Be willing to make some (often radical!) changes in your lifestyle; and, 3. Cultivate your ability to deal with the inevitable resistance you WILL get from the medical establishment and family/friends who think anyone who wears a white coat is nearly as omniscient as God. (Like [this](#).)

In short, be willing to be the "annoying" patient. Don't submit to cancer and/or your doctor's "authority." Be the CEO of your own cancer care. Conquer.

"Most important, I hope you are never a 'patient' again—neither one who suffers nor one who passively submits—but instead you always decide to take an active and engaged role in your life, health, and happiness."

~ Kelly A. Turner

HOW TO DEAL WITH MOLDY BASEMENTS

"This goes along with an underlying belief that most of my research subjects shared, which is, 'To get rid of cancer, you must change the conditions under which it thrives. ... Therefore, if you change the underlying conditions of the body, so those conditions become healthier, cancer cells will naturally die off.'"

~ Kelly A. Turner

"The analogy I like to use is a moldy basement. Imagine going into your basement and finding mold everywhere, just as a surgeon sometimes opens up a person's body, only to find cancer everywhere. One strategy to get rid of the mold is to bleach the entire basement, which will certainly kill the mold. This is similar to chemotherapy and radiation, which are both strong interventions that directly kill cancer cells. To continue the analogy, imagine that the bleach has worked and there is now no more mold left in your basement—or no more cancer left in your body. Now your doctor says that all you can do is hope it never comes back.

The issue with this scenario is that the mold in your basement is *destined* to grow back as long as the conditions under which mold thrives—such as darkness and dampness—are still present. However, if you were to bring UV lights into your basement and constantly run a fan and dehumidifier, then the mold would not grow back. This is the main idea behind 'changing the conditions under which cancer thrives,' and you will notice that all nine factors in this book work toward that goal. The only catch is that the changes must be permanent, otherwise the minute you stop the fan, the dehumidifier, or UV light, the old conditions will return and mold may once again grow. That is why the radical survivors I study make mostly permanent changes to their lifestyles, in the hope that they will prevent cancer from ever growing in their bodies again."

The idea of dealing with mold hits home—both literally and figuratively. A few years ago, we had an undetected leak in our kitchen that led to some crazy mold that contributed to Alexandra having a couple of terrifying seizures and trips to the hospital. (She's antifragile great now.)

Now, did we simply throw some bleach on the mold and call it a day? No. We fixed the drip that was creating the moisture that led to the mold.

As we've discussed, that's what you do when you take a wise SYSTEMS approach rather than a less-than-wise SYMPTOMS approach.

It's NOT ENOUGH to slash (surgery) and then splash the bleach (chemo).

As Nasha Winters says, we need to treat the TERRAIN not just the tumor. We need to make the environment within our bodies INHOSPITABLE to cancer.

ESPECIALLY after we've already had it once. It's always nice when *primary* prevention works and we avoid cancer in the first place. And... SECONDARY prevention (making sure "the mold" that is cancer) doesn't come back is EVEN MORE important.

Remember our [wise gardeners](#). Quit throwing in [ice cubes](#). Optimize your terrain.

EPIGENETICS

"Finally, epigenetics is a new and exciting field of science that studies how human behavior can affect gene expression. In a nutshell, epigenetics has shown that, while we may not be able to change which genes we inherit from our parents, we can—through our behavior—change whether or not they are turned on or off (i.e., expressed or not expressed). Keep in mind that a faulty gene you have inherited can only hurt you if it is turned on."

"Epigenetics." As we discuss in [this Optimize +1](#), epi is Greek for "over" or "outside of" our genes.

As you know by now, I believe the primary cause of cancer is dysfunctional energy metabolism. And... When we talk about genetics, we need to focus on EPIGENETICS. We need to look "over" our genes—not just within them.

Kelly walks us through a TON of lifestyle practices we can engage in that will help us both make our genes dance the way we want them to dance AND rehabilitate our energy metabolism—which is a winning combination.

"When Radical Remission survivors talk to me about trying to feel more love, joy, and happiness in order to help their bodies heal, they talk about it as they would talk about flossing their teeth or working out: they see happiness as a habit you have to practice daily in order to reap the desired benefits."

~ Kelly A. Turner

Super quick: Suppressing emotions? Not good. Allow yourself to feel the fear, doubt, overwhelm, despair. Then let it fully pass through you and move on. Build positive emotions: Be happy, joyful, grateful. Laugh, celebrate life, see the awesome: EVERY day. Connect with loved ones (hug, cuddle, hang out) *and* connect with something bigger than yourself (pray, meditate, etc.)!

YOUR REASONS FOR LIVING

"I don't believe people are looking for the meaning of life as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive."

~ Joseph Campbell

"That is why one of the first questions I always ask cancer patients is 'Why do you want to stay alive?' Not just *do* you want to stay alive, but *why*. What else would you still like to experience in this life? Which activities bring you energy and joy? I encourage them—and I encourage you—to consider these questions, because even if we never achieve all our life goals, simply having them allows us to keep pulling invigorating life-force energy into our bodies."

That's from the final key: "Having Strong Reasons for Living."

Every chapter has some great "Action Steps." The ones from this chapter are particularly great. Among the tips: "Write down how many years you want to live. Research conducted on people who live to be one hundred has shown that most of them always knew with deep conviction that they wanted to live to be one hundred. Keep your ideal number taped to your bathroom mirror so you see it every morning as you start your day."

And: "Write your ideal obituary." Plus: "Make a simple list of all your current reasons for living and enjoying life." And: "Imagine that you have unlimited wealth (say, over three hundred billion dollars), perfect health, and are guaranteed total success in whatever you set out to do." ← What would you do?! Cultivate your reasons for living!

This was [David Servan-Schreiber's](#) #1 thing in *Anticancer*: A strong WILL TO LIVE!!! Here's to tapping into that life force and giving it all we got, my co-Conqueror!!!

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note,
you'll probably like...

[The Metabolic Approach to Cancer](#)

[Tripping over the Truth](#)

[Cancer As a Metabolic Disease](#)

[Keto for Cancer](#)

[Anticancer](#)

[Outside the Box Cancer Therapies](#)

About the Author of "Radical Remission"

KELLY A. TURNER



Dr. Kelly Turner, PhD is a researcher, lecturer, and consultant in the field of integrative oncology. Her specialized research focus is the Radical Remission of cancer, which is a remission that occurs either in the absence of conventional medicine, or after conventional medicine has failed. Connect: www.kelly-turner.com

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at optimize.me.