

P – PLAN – You can't get anywhere if you don't know where you are going. When you go on a vacation do you throw any old thing into a suitcase, get into the car and start driving, with no plan? No, you wouldn't do that. Finding a peaceful perspective is very similar. First, want to know where you are going. What is your intention? Is it fun? Alone time? Couple time? Family time? This might require some research. What is important to you? What is important to your spouse? Where are the overlaps? These things can be anything from going for your favourite ice cream to doing a bit "bucket list" item, like travelling to a certain country, visiting a special relative, watching a favourite band perform live, or going to a special sporting event. To get started, what if you could do only one thing on the list, what would it be? What resources do you need? Can you financially do it or will you look at some fundraising or "make a wish" organizations? When can you do it? Do you need to arrange time off work? Do you need to consider adjusting a treatment schedule or need some medical assistance? The key to planning something is that both you and your spouse agree on the plan. It might take a few discussions. It's very important, and respectful, to be on the same page before going any further.

I want to _____
and will need help or resources for the following:

What is important to you?

What is important to your spouse, or person you are caring for?

What are the things you both want or would like to do?

If you could only do one thing on your list, what would it be?

What help do you need? Finances? Fundraising? Time from work?

When do you want to do this?

E – ENGAGE – In the planning stage you asked yourself a lot of questions. In the Engage stage you start to answer them. Write down all the people who might be able to help you. In my book, *Walking the Journey Together ... Alone*, I have a resource section that lists some of the adult wish granting organizations. There might be people who can help by providing a place to stay. Who can you call or contact to organize a fundraiser. When you are faced with a life threatening illness, you will find many people in the community who really, really want to help and don't know how. There is someone waiting for you to ask them to organize a steak dinner, a bake sale, or a garage sale. They want to make a difference and if they can send you to Disneyland, or to see your spouse's grandmother, they will be more than happy to help.

Who I can ask for help (Make a Wish foundations, employer, family, friends, community groups, who can organize a fundraiser):

What medical needs do I need?

A – ACTION – After you know what you want to do, and have engaged the people to help you make it happen, it's up to you to take action. Book your time off. Talk to the doctor about any medical issues you should look after. Doctors will often help you enjoy some meaningful moments and create life long memories with your family.

Sample Action Steps:

- Request time off from work
- Ask for help with looking after home while you are away
- Book the trip
- Talk to the doctors about adjusting treatment schedules
- Take to doctors about best timing for any major trips
- See who can help with fundraising
- Ask for help
- Tell someone what you want to do
- Book a massage or trip to a gym
- Find a caring companion to keep you moving forward

Created by Lorna M. Scott, Best Selling Author:

*Walking the Journey Together ... Alone, Finding Peace, Hope, and Joy in the Middle of the Sh***

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My next 3 action steps:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C – COMPASSION – This is critical. Please, please, be gentle on yourself, and on the person you are caring for. The peaceful perspective will help you become unattached to any outcome you desire. You might have a few times that your best laid plans get abandoned. Your loved one's health can be unpredictable and you never really know when a crises or immediate change of treatment might happen. Have compassion when things don't go quite right. Believe there will be another chance to finish the plan. It's OK to modify the plan.

Have compassion for your spouse, especially when things go sideways because of their health. They might not show it, or tell you, but there is no doubt they feel guilty when their health interferes with the plans you have made. They really don't like to disappoint you. You might have the spouse who just wants to do nothing. No amount of coaxing will get them to see the value in this peaceful perspective. This is a time for deeper compassion, for both of you. It might feel like you are grieving another loss because you can't seem to get them on the same page as you. That's OK. Trying to make them be, do or feel something they're not won't make it happen. There may be underlying reasons, like foggy brain, poor memory, or pain that is interfering with their desire to get into action. When you use your peaceful perspective and compassion you will understand that this is a time to go back to the planning step and figure out what you can do that will bring some peace, and joy. Maybe it means bringing home the favourite ice cream instead of going out. Perhaps it's having a candlelight dinner. Maybe it's inviting friends over. It might mean that you do some things on your own. Maybe it's a weekend away with friends. A night out at a sporting event. Having a peaceful perspective means being able to adjust your sails when the wind changes. Remembering to first feel compassion will help you take the steps, even baby ones, with confidence, and a calm heart.

When things don't the way I want them to, I can handle it this way:

The ways I show compassion to my self:

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The ways I show compassion to person I am caring for:

E – ENJOY – Once you've made it through planning, engaging the resources you need, getting into action, and having compassion, you deserve to enjoy what you've created! It doesn't matter if it's a trip to Disneyland, or 5 minutes together in a park. You get to choose how you feel. It's true that joy can be hard to find. Once you make your intention to enjoy something, get into action and roll with what happens, you will find joy. It is what you are looking for.

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