

# Is it Possible to Thrive in Our Storms of Life? We can, from a 5 time cancer survivor

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Laura J. Weber believes that we not only can survive in our storms but we can thrive in them. How does she know? Because she has done it. These were the words she opened her Toastmasters speech in the Area 55 International speech contest that won her second place.

The cancer tornado first visited Laura in 2012. She heard the words “you have cancer” four more times in as many years. She underwent two surgeries and fifty-five radiation treatments.

During her speech, she shared three key points that not only let her survive cancer but allowed her to thrive through the raging storm that swirled around her.

Defining her purpose for going through cancer was the first key point. She read a magazine article about cancer patients defining their purpose for going through cancer after her second diagnosis. Cancer gave Laura the opportunity to grow closer to God and to shine His light to others going through their storms.

The second key point came after the third diagnosis. Laura faced a radical surgery that would change her life forever. It was a surgery she didn't want. In search for a second opinion, she went to the #1 cancer research facility in the U.S. - MD Anderson. She met a man on a shuttle bus ride that asked her “what is your story?” Laura shared her story, and then he proceeded to tell her that he was terminal and needed a miracle to survive. The man said, “You need a FROG coin,” and handed her a green coin. The coin had a picture of a frog on one side and a reference to Isaiah 26:4 on the other side. The coin's message was to Fully Rely on God (FROG) and trust in God. Laura decided to choose life, and trust in God to bring her through the surgery. She had the surgery, and the outcomes were better than anticipated.

Laura was diagnosed for the 5th time three years after the third diagnosis. Laura needed miracle to survive because there were no conventional treatment options available. She went back to MD Anderson in search for her miracle, much like the gentleman who gave her the FROG coin. Laura agreed to enter a clinical trial and proceeded to have all the pre-clinical tests so that she could officially enter the trial. Laura prayed the following prayer the night before she would get the test results: “Lord, wouldn't it be cool if I were to hear the words no evidence of disease and think of the glory that would bring You.” Laura drifted off to sleep and arose the next morning not giving much thought about the prayer. The clinical trial nurse walked into the room and said, “has the doctor been in yet?” Laura said, “no.” She then said, “I don't want to steal his thunder.” Laura didn't know what she meant by that statement. The nurse then shared that Laura wouldn't be entering the clinical trial because the CT scan showed no evidence of disease and evidence of disease was a requirement to enter the clinical trial. Never losing hope and believing for her miracle was the third key point for Laura thriving in her storm.

Laura concluded her speech by encouraging the audience to define their purpose for going through storms, choose life and trust God, and never lose hope and believe for their own miracles.

Laura is a published author and speaker. Her book “In His Hands, I Am Healed” describes her story of how she not only survived cancer but how she thrived as the raging storm (cancer) swirled around her. Laura encourages people to flourish through their storms and empowers them to live vibrant lives while facing their most difficult hardships.

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Laura J. Weber (Center) Wins Second Place in Toastmaster's Area 55 International Speech Competition.

Lynn Baldwin (Area 55 Director) and Bob Beideck (Division E Director) present the trophy.