

James Hill

A letter I wish I had received during my cancer experience

Dear James,

Although you do not know your strength and spirit that were diagnosed. I know, much to look forward to. I times to come when you it yet, your diagnosis of having a malignant brain tumor will be just one test of you will face in the next 20 years. This letter is from you, 20 years after you right now you are six, and cannot imagine ever being 26. Believe me, you have am writing you this letter of do's and don'ts so that you can reference it during might need some extra strength and encouragement.

- Do remember not to be frightened the first time you see yourself without hair. Think of how many men in their old age wake up and finally realize they are balding. Think of it as a trial run for when you are older.
- Do not feel alone when you are standing on the sidelines watching your classmates play sports. Be proud of your accomplishment to re-learn how to walk and do all of the day to day things others take for granted. Instead of being an athlete, you will develop a passion for photography and you will be praised not for how many goals you've scored but for how you've opened people's minds to seeing things in a new way.
- Don't be scared by other people's questions about your illness. Remember the facts of the type of cancer YOU HAVE and don't listen to anyone's "story of statistics" or about the "chances of survival".
- Do remember that your learning disability is not something that you should be ashamed about. It was not your fault that you were diagnosed with cancer. It was not your fault that the radiation affected how you read and write.
- Don't be shy in making friends. Remember that people will want to be your friend even after leading that you had cancer. In fact, your success in beating cancer will be one of the things that people will think is "coolest" about you.
- Do be patient with yourself because even though you may think schoolwork might be your biggest challenge, it is not. You and the rest of our family will face tougher emotional and financial problems as a result of mom and dad getting divorced. Make sure that you look back to how you overcame your fight with cancer and remember that if you could beat cancer, you can beat whatever else is to come.
- Do remember this time with your father. You will often think back of what it was like to spend time with him.
- Don't allow yourself to think that you'll never go to college. You will watch your sisters go away to school one by one and you will secretly wonder if you are going to ever be able to go. The answer is yes, but the journey to get into school will not be easy.
- Do remember to enjoy every day because the years will go by very quickly. One day you will realize that everything you've gone through is you past.