

# Global Cancer Conference & Medicare Summit

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## Intimacy after cancer

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After surgery, 3 different chemotherapies, Herceptin, radiation, and if your cancer is estrogen driven (estrogen drives our metabolism) there are emotional, physical scars and side effects. This does nothing to enhance intimacy. Men with bladder, colon, prostate and rectal cancer, reports difficulty resuming intimacy after treatment. The author will talk about body image, including his own, as that is a real issue after treatment. The author will discuss coping: Mourn your losses--they are real. Focus on ways coping with cancer has made you stronger, wiser and more realistic. Realize that you are more than your cancer. Intimacy is twofold, involving both physical and emotional bonding. Feelings: Inadequacy about self; damaged goods; not good enough for spouse; boyfriend, girlfriend or being single; low self esteem; looking in mirror and feeling like an ugly duckling. Options: Take everything just said and hit the 'delete' button. Cancer does not define us, cancer makes us stronger, more sensitive to others, treasure life and appreciate relationships. Communication: Back to basics—let partner know how you feel; cuddle, touch each other—sex is so much more than the sex act itself. The author was diagnosed in 1982 with Cervical Cancer and had a hysterectomy. The author was diagnosed with Breast Cancer in 2005 and biopsy showed it was Stage 1, Grade 2, clear margins, no lymph node involvement, ER/PR and HER2 +3. She had the Oncotype Dx and was in the highest percentile for spread and re occurrence within 10 years. She opted for a lumpectomy. Her treatment was 4 dense doses of Cytosin and Adriamycin, 12 weeks of Taxol (which caused neuropathy), 1 year of Herceptin and radiation daily for 6 weeks.

## Biography

Susan McHugh is a two-time cancer survivor, Author (The Power of a Woman), Speaker, Certified Life Coach, a Breast Cancer Educator and a Cancer Coach. She is in Advisory Boards: Lotus Survival Foundation and AlantiCare. She was selected as "Woman of Outstanding Leadership as a Coach" by the International Women's Leadership Association and "Professional Woman of the Year" by the National Association of Professional Women.

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