

Up

I was declared cancer free of colon cancer this summer (2018) after surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, and nine years of blood work, CT scans, and MRIs. Cancer used to be a death sentence, but today certain types of cancer can be cured with a high success rate.

I wish to give credit for my complete recovery to Dr. Jimmy Grierson, Dr. Mark Johnson, and Dr. Mehrdad Jafari of Skagit Valley Clinics and Hospital. They were a fantastic team who worked together to diagnose and treat my illness. I was a challenging case, but they worked through multiple surgeries, years of checkups, and counseling. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for the extension to my life they made possible.

I remember the beginning of this major life experience associated with the images of a movie shown on the hospital television screen I watched during the first few days of recovery. I was on Dedlaudid, a pain medication like morphine, that may cause intense dreams and distorted reality. So, when I awoke one night to the movie, "Up," on the TV, it was difficult to distinguish truth from fiction. All I know is, that it has been one of my favorite movies ever since.

The story tells the exciting adventures of a little old man and a young boy who helped him transport his house with hundreds of helium-filled balloons to a site in a remote jungle. The site where the old man's house finally landed was where he and his wife of many years had dreamed of eventually living, before she died.

The adventures were highly imaginative, colorful, and melancholy. But, somehow, the relationship between the grouchy old man and the young, devoted little boy, struck a chord during my drug-induced melancholy in the hospital, and provided an alternative life experience during the most intense part of my recovery. I also had some strange dreams during that week, but I won't bore you with the details. Suffice it to say, that the night nurses got to hear some wild stories when they woke me for blood draws and meds.

Now, many years later -- nine to be exact -- I'm still trying to figure out why I found the movie, "Up," so significant. I guess it's because I'm now a grouchy old man, I have grandsons who are devoted to me, my wife and I've experienced incredible traveling adventures, and we've owned houses in exotic places.

Do me a favor sometime, rent the movie, "Up," and let me know your reaction. Did you relate to the storyline and the connection between the old man and the little boy, or am I off in my own imaginary, drug-induced world?