

How Sex Therapy and Enhanced Intimacy Can Help You and Your Spouse Cope with Erectile Dysfunction

Adapted from *CONQUER PROSTATE CANCER: How Medicine, Faith, Love and Sex Can Renew Your Life* by Rabbi Edgar Weinsberg, with Dr. Robert Carey

This report is intended to help couples grapple with the issues of sexual intimacy confronting most prostate cancer patients before or after treatment, and give readers a sense of the book's content and style.

Even before I first saw urologist Dr. Jonathan Jones, to begin my early-stage, localized prostate cancer treatment, I suffered from occasional impotence and a lowered libido. This was due to medical conditions such as prostatitis, an enlarged benign prostate (BPH), and diabetes. My libido had also been diminished because my wife, Yvonne, herself had to contend with severe, ongoing pain and I didn't want to impose on her with sexual advances. She suffered from severe spinal stenosis, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue.

Consequently, after reviewing my options for prostate cancer treatment, I nervously asked the doctor if he knew of a sex therapist. What my wife and I needed to know is how we could function more effectively in bed, despite our current maladies, even before finalizing which procedure was most suitable to eradicate the prostate cancer.

Dr. Jones indicated that a sex therapist's guidance was a long shot. He voiced his doubts that it would make any difference for us. Instead he stressed that, apart from the prostate cancer, my impotence might be caused by any or all of the medical factors I've described. He referred especially to my neuropathy, secondary to diabetes, with accompanying depression, and he added that my medications themselves might have diminished my sex drive.

After further thought - maybe it was that pleading look on my face - Dr. Jones referred us to a noted sexologist at St. Petersburg Hospital, Dr. Rhonda Levine. She was an experienced clinician, whose views on sex education and practices have appeared in local St. Petersburg newspapers and television. "She might be of help," opined the urologist. "After all," he added, "While a man has an orgasm in his pelvic area, sex starts in the mind."