Adam Bernard – ChemBro

Testicular cancer survivor and fitness junkie Adam Bernard shares his experiences and life lessons learned from facing this disease.

November 14, 2020 By Justin Birckbichler

Welcome to the Band of Ballers! In this series on ABSOT, I'm turning over control to some other ballsy testicular cancer survivors and patients who have inspired me with their work in advocacy and awareness during and after their diagnosis. This month's feature is all about Adam Bernard, who wrote a book about his experience, entitled ChemBro. Enjoy!

My right testicle has Highlander status in my pants—"There can be only one!"

This isn't the way I normally introduce myself, but seeing as we're on a website about testicular cancer, it seemed like my one opportunity to do so.

Speaking of one, why do I only have one testicle? Well, I think you've probably figured this out by now, but I'm a testicular cancer survivor. (Editor's Note: I did not see that one coming.)

Every cancer story is unique, and mine begins in January of 2017, when at the start of the month I had been invited to test for my 5th degree black belt in Kempo that coming June.

I also started to have a nagging pain in my groin, but being a lifelong martial artist, and one of those crazy CrossFit people, I chalked it up (pun intended) to being just another strain. What I didn't realize was, it was a tumor. By the time it literally brought me to my knees, it had torn, bled, and the cancer had spread to one of my lungs.

During the final days of January, I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. My journey would include surgery, chemo, and a surprise second surgery. It would also include continuing to train six days a week, never wavering from my athletic goals, never missing a deadline at work (when I'm not talking about testicles, I'm a music journalist), and never losing my sense of humor.

Courtesy of Justin Birckbichler

I've detailed my entire cancer journey in a book titled ChemBro – Embracing Beastmode to Beat Cancer, which is out now via Dreaming Big Publications.

I wrote the book at the behest of my friends, who said I needed to write it. They were right, even though it wasn't until after it was written that I fully understood why I needed to write it.

Here are three reasons why I now realize I needed to write ChemBro.

1. We don't talk about testicular cancer, which is why we're so incredibly unprepared for what surgery, and recovery, entails.

Talking about our genitals can be awkward. It shouldn't be, but for most people it is, and if me telling my story can help someone else, and can answer any questions they may have, I'm more than happy to share every moment from the process, even the moments some might consider embarrassing.

2. I want to show everyone the power of a positive mindset.

Some people joke about the power of positivity, but I'm here to tell you it's 100% real. The better your attitude, the better positioned you'll be to take on whatever comes your way, and this applies to everybody who's going through anything in life (which, by my count, is everyone at some point in time).

While my story is about testicular cancer, the mental aspect of my journey is applicable to anyone.

3. I want to motivate others to find the warrior spirit inside themselves.

We all go through things in life, whether the issues are physical, mental, or emotional. My hope is that my story will inspire others to look in the mirror and see a warrior, a warrior who can get through anything.

Something I mention multiple times in the book is that hurdles are meant to be jumped over. I want people to realize they have the power to jump over whatever the hurdles they encounter in life.

Before I go, I'd like to leave everyone with a few ideas on how men can take charge of their health.

These are things we should all be doing, and if you're already doing them, that's great!

We should all be eating healthy. If you haven't cut fast food, sugary sodas, and candy out of your life, it's time to start weaning yourself off them. While they may be tasty, they're destroying your insides, and causing a heck of a lot of harm to your body.

Regularly getting some kind of exercise is also extremely important. I'm not saying you have to be

a crazy gym rat like me, but finding some type of exercise you enjoy will put you on the right path to better health, and a better quality of life.

When I was told I was going to have to go through chemo, one of the first things my oncologist said to me was that because I'd been leading a healthy lifestyle I would have an easier time getting through everything. Now, don't get me wrong, it still wasn't easy, and there were still rough moments, but I can't imagine what it would've been like if I hadn't been a healthy individual.

Finally, we need to stop the nonsense of equating our genitals with our manhood.

Through the years we've, for some reason, decided to nickname our genitals our "manhood," but there are so many other things that make us men, and I'm not just talking about body hair!

When we begin to realize what makes us men has less to do with what's in our pants, and more to do with what's in our heart, maybe we'll start going to the doctor early enough to catch testicular cancer before it has a chance to do too much damage.

Be sure to connect with Adam by visiting him at his blog, on Twitter, or picking up a copy of ChemBro. Until next time, Carpe Scrotiem!

Know someone (or even yourself!) who is supporting TC awareness and would be willing to share their story? Drop their name, contact, and why they should be featured into this Google Form and I'll reach out to them and/or you!

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