

Becoming a Father After Facing Cancer

After my testicular cancer journey, I wasn't sure about fatherhood, but being a dad is the greatest honor.

September 24, 2024 By [Justin Birckbichler](#)

Remember Me? It's Been a Hot Minute, And I've Been Living My Best Life.

For those who have been following this A Ballsy Sense of Tumor (ABSOT) blog, you might have noticed a bit of radio silence. And by radio silence, I mean I literally haven't published anything since July 2023, which was the post about [conceiving after testicular cancer](#). Classic Justin — announce I'm going to father a baby girl and then don't give any sort of update.

Recently, I [chatted with my friends over at the Testicular Cancer Foundation](#), and it occurred to me that I never provided an update on the aforementioned post. Talk about a cliffhanger. Well, I'm back today, rising like a grizzly bear from a long hibernation. Pretty accurate metaphor to be honest.

To cut to the chase, weighing in at over 8 pounds and more than 20 inches long, our baby girl joined us in November 2023. I can't overstate the love and wonder we felt seeing our perfectly healthy daughter for the first time. She's got her mama's looks, her dad's size and eyes, and she seems to be rocking out with her brother's dance moves.

In all honesty, I've been somewhat neglecting ABSOT to fully embrace my new role as a girl dad.

As I said, I haven't posted any blog posts in over 13 months, and a quick glance at my Insta shows a total of two pics since then: her birth announcement and a LEGO workshop I led for Cactus Cancer Society. Admittedly, that's pretty on brand — spending time with my family and building LEGO is how I spend most of my non-working time.

Life has been busy, but in the best possible way. It's been a whirlwind of diaper changes, sleepless nights (mostly for my wife, since I am the world's heaviest sleeper — love you!), but more importantly, countless moments of sheer wonder and love.

Our family dynamics have shifted beautifully. Huge credit goes to my wife who has worked so hard to be a great mother and being the puzzle piece who holds this family together. Big Brother mode has been fully embraced by our son and he is always willing to help out, whether it's feeding her on the go, getting her out of her crib, or singing silly songs to her. Can't wait for them to both read this in a few years and cringe.

In my earlier post, I mentioned that I would do a reflection on what it means to bring new life into the world.

She's now almost ten months old and I still continue to be in my peak Dad era. I am fortunate to have a remote job where I can stay home with her each and every day. I'm also pretty sure my co-workers prefer seeing her on calls instead of me, but I'm not mad about it.

Unsurprisingly, my competitive nature has continued to be fueled by her far surpassing developmental milestones, such as rolling over (at two months), crawling (at six months), and more. Come at me, bro (or I think the kids now say "Let him cook").

However, I never thought I would be the kind of guy who marvels at little moments, yet I'm now the guy who spent ten minutes trying to determine if she was using a raking or pincer grasp. (For the record, pincher was my final verdict.) I'm also the guy who has his kids on his lock screen and will be more than happy to show you at a moment's notice.

Those who know me personally will understand the gravity of what I'm about to say next. I initially had ChatGPT write this post for me, since I love using AI wherever I can. However, I ended up rewriting the content of this entire post myself since it just couldn't convey what I feel by being a dad. I'm pretty sure the only thing that survived from the initial GPT draft was the section headers.

So, to everyone who has been part of this journey, thank you for your support and patience.

When I married my wife and became a dad for the first time, I knew fatherhood was something special, and having another child in the mix further confirms that. When I lost my cat, Conner, unexpectedly, my mom said something that I didn't quite understand until my daughter was born. She said, "When you have one kid, you're afraid that you won't be able to love the next one as much as the first. Then the second one comes along, and you realize the amount of love a parent has for all of their children is limitless."

Being a dad is the greatest honor I will ever have in my life. Full stop. It's made all my other roles (teacher, technology coordinator, advocate, project manager, director, and more) pale in comparison. In the aftermath of my testicular cancer journey, I wasn't totally sure if I wanted to be a father (or if I even could become one). Now, I can't imagine life going through life without the title of Dad.

To wrap it up here, I could promise to be more diligent with updates moving forward, but honestly, I don't know if I can hold myself to that promise. Scratch that; I know I won't be making regular updates. So I will leave you with this vague commitment: I will check in at least once before the next Summer Olympics. But until then, I'm off to see a girl about a nap.

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