

Foreword

BY COREY J. LANGER, MD

If attitude alone could defeat cancer, Louis Cesarini would have been disease-free within two weeks of his diagnosis. Since the onset of this unwanted and unanticipated journey in the world of oncology—eighteen months ago at the time of this writing—Louis has been indefatigable. He has approached his lung cancer diagnosis with tenacity and courage, and a unique, innate buoyancy of spirit I have seldom witnessed in my thirty-four years as an oncologist. Some patients have trouble coping with their cancer. This can affect caregivers and family by leaving them exhausted and deflated. Louis is quite the opposite. Louis radiates energy, even in the face of symptoms that would leave others defeated or depressed. The force field of energy and optimism Louis has generated elevates those around him. It revitalizes them. It makes everyone who cares for him feel part of the battle, invaluable allies in his fight, not just rote or perfunctory clinicians or practitioners. We need not tiptoe around the diagnosis or its implications. From day one, Louis has been fully engaged in this battle, and, I might add, incredibly engaging in his interactions with those who take care of him.

As Louis's medical oncologist since the summer of 2019, I have witnessed firsthand his spirit and strength. Cancer is a wily, formidable foe. It lays booby traps we often never expect; and the therapies we deploy to battle this disease, even while shrinking tumors, can cause side effects that will often sideline otherwise resolute, physically intact individuals. But Louis has remained unfazed. With his husband Scott by his side and the prayers and support of innumerable friends, coworkers and family, Louis has been able to wage every battle, making the transition from chemotherapy and immunotherapy to targeted therapy, dealing

with life-threatening pulmonary compromise and spread to his brain and bones, always focusing on the activities that give meaning to his life, in particular, his love of the French horn. He has used his capacity to play this unique instrument as a gauge of his well-being. It's a personal metric. Every time he successfully completes a piece is another victory in this relentless battle. Hence, the title for this memoir.

While I've lapsed into cliched military analogies to describe Louis's experience, he has appropriately and more specifically employed musical allusions to elucidate his life and his journey in the world of oncology. This *pacific* theme captures his life before the cancer diagnosis and aptly resonates with his experience since. Most pieces of music have well-defined movements; some end too quickly.

I pray that Louis's *Survival Symphony* lasts indefinitely and that he be rewarded with the long-term quality survival he so richly deserves. I have promised him I will do everything I can to help make this possible.