



## Trim Healthy Podcast with Serene & Pearl

Episode 367 ~ Beating Stage 4 Cancer! ~ Find Hope with Arden's Journey!

Air Date 2/7/24- [Watch Here](#) ~ [Listen on iTunes](#) ~ [Listen on Spotify](#)

### Quotables

- "A Good Man's Never Stuck" – Grandad Bowen

### Pearl's Introduction

*Most of you know that Arden is Serene's eldest... and that he came very close to death and is now completely cancer-free. Over the past few years, many have heard little bits about Arden... but we are allowing him to tell the whole story. Without further ado, here it is...*

### In His Own Words... Arden's Story of Overcoming Cancer

#### The Beginning

I grew up on the Hilltop (in Primm Springs, Tennessee) in an amazing home with a healthy lifestyle...truth be told, I didn't fully appreciate the health knowledge I was given! But I did still benefit greatly from it. I enjoyed the home-cooked meals growing up with Serene Allison as my mom...But, honestly, I didn't love all the 'health' craziness.

In September of 2015 (before I got married) when I was 18 years of age, I was looking to earn extra income. I was working for my dad (Sam) and then I was doing different construction jobs for a couple of contractors. But then I took a job that I thought sounded especially adventurous: *I was going to join a cell tower maintenance crew for some quick money.* My dad told me not to, but I decided to do it anyway because I needed to make money to prepare for marriage (I hadn't yet proposed to Esther, but I had the intention to and I needed to save up; many are familiar with Esther from her book, [Trim Healthy Indulgence](#)).

I was on the road, away from the Hilltop, for two months doing cell tower maintenance... mowing, weed-eating, and spraying the weed killer, Roundup around cell towers and access roads. One day, the truck sprayer, which had glyphosate (a.k.a. Roundup) broke... when that happened, I had to put on a backpack sprayer and I didn't put the lid on correctly. When I jumped over a fence and landed awkwardly, my hands hit my knees, the lid popped off and the glyphosate emptied all over my shoulders and neck.

I did my best to rinse it off, I poured my still partly full water bottle over my neck but that didn't do much. I had to finish my work day so I couldn't do anything about it. I was a young, 18-year-old kid not realizing the three gallons of Roundup that had spilled over me was one of the most

notorious cancer-causing agents. And it was soaking into my body all through the rest of my day. I didn't get to take a shower until 7:30 pm that night.

I'm convinced that the cancer that I battled was originally caused by this incident because in the subsequent weeks, I started to experience intense fatigue. No teenage kid should feel the way I began to feel but I chalked it up to working so hard and did my best to ignore it.

## **My Alternative Treatment Journey**

When I was done with that job, I came back home and proposed to Esther, the love of my life. Then, in February of 2016, we got married. On that day, during the wedding, I now know that my Auntie Pearl (and my mom) were concerned that I looked pale. I'd lost weight. When everyone saw me standing up at my wedding they all just assumed I looked so drawn was I had been working so hard...

But only 5 weeks later, I was diagnosed with *Hodgkin's Lymphoma*. I didn't even know what *Hodgkin's Lymphoma* was but the doctor informed me that it was cancer. At that point, I thought only 'old people' and 'unhealthy people' got cancer. And although more tired than usual, I was still feeling okay at the time. I had simply gone in for a routine check-up. I'd started to experience a little bit of swelling around the lymph nodes in my collarbone. The x-ray came back with something unexpected... there were masses there. (As an aside, *Hodgkin's Lymphoma* is a blood cancer...you don't have a 'normal' tumor. Hodgkin's essentially weaponizes your lymph nodes to *be* the tumor.)

Just to illustrate how little I understood about the seriousness of the situation, a couple of days later I was playing basketball with my cousins, and I told them I had been diagnosed with cancer. We all just laughed... The point is no one could believe it!

My mom (Serene) was *furious* that the doctor had told me I had cancer without a biopsy. Looking back, she says she was in denial. And she was diligently looking up all the other things that could have caused the neck swelling (anything besides cancer!).

The doctor recommended an oncologist and said: *'It's a good thing you have this specific cancer... because it's very treatable. If it is what I think it is, you'll be fine...you have time.'*

A biopsy revealed that yes... it was cancer so we began to discuss treatments. Esther and I sat down with my mom and dad, and we pored over our options. We'd heard way too many horror stories of the conventional chemo and radiation approach so we didn't want to get involved with that. And since we'd been told this was going to be a slow-growing cancer with a lot of alternative treatment options, we decided to go for it. My parents got me into one of the best alternative medical clinics in Cancun, Mexico. This natural alternative treatment was filled with wild diets, daily coffee enemas, shockwave therapy, and many others. They were pulling my bloodwork daily. But I wasn't responding in the way they hoped.

## Coming to Death's Gate

Halfway through the treatments in Cancun things changed *dramatically* for the worse... I was having night sweats, and I was incredibly lethargic. I could feel the cancer growing. It had become a significant growth on my neck, underarms, and elsewhere. I couldn't understand it because this was not as slow as my first doctor had predicted. It felt like the masses got bigger every day. After a month at the clinic and by the time I was headed back home, my cancer had rapidly progressed, and I had dropped to 125 LBS (down from 185 LBS). I'm 6 ft 5 so you can imagine what I looked like.

*This quickly escalated into the greatest crisis of my life.*

When Esther and I were coming down the escalator at Nashville airport, my mom was genuinely *shocked* when she saw me. The growth on my neck had gotten so big it had started to take over my face. It looked like a huge coconut bulging out of my shoulder and growing into that side of my face. My mom has told me since that she'd prepared herself because she knew the alternative treatments had not worked but she felt fear in every cell of her body when she first saw me. I think that was the first time she was truly scared for my survival. That was the end of July...and then the month of August was even worse.

Despite all the hundreds of supplements that I had been sent home with from the clinic and keeping up with their take-home protocol, the cancer was getting bigger, and it was happening very fast. My father-in-law, very jokingly, described it as an alien on the side of my neck, which was an appropriate description.

At the end of August, I had come to death's gate...*I was no longer there*. I was in excruciating pain, and I was obsessively itching. Jaundice had set in. My organs were shutting down...I'd lost pretty much all muscle mass and was down to skin and bone.

It was so bad that when my Nana would bring a glass of juice from her organic garden, I would simply stare at the juice for hours without drinking it. I could barely get any food or liquid down.

I'm so *thankful* that at the very worst of it, my wife and my parents were there with me because they had seen enough to know that we needed to change course— *and quickly*. My mom had been talking to the medical practitioners at the clinic several times a day. She would tell them how I was looking and acting but they kept saying the way I was feeling was due to the detox. Finally, she got hold of the head doctor there. She told him it looked like I was dying. He said that with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, you usually have more time. But if it were his son, he'd get him onto conventional treatment right away. Then he said sometimes you must break the back of cancer with chemotherapy so that the natural remedies can take effect.

My parents got me in the car heading to the hospital. *None of us will ever forget that night at the end of August.*

The pressure on my internal organs caused by the growth of the cancer was excruciating. I got to Vanderbilt hospital and a medical team rushed me into emergency. Student interns were examining me, along with the standard emergency care staff. The doctor told my wife, Esther, *"This is the worst case of Hodgkin's I've ever seen... and IF he survives, his neck and underarms will never be the same. They'll never get down to normal size."*

The way my mom remembers it, I was as white as a ghost. She was experiencing the rock bottom of watching me, her son, so close to death.

Looking back at this season, my mom, Serene, says:

*'There was no way that I could even sleep when I went home that night and left Arden there with Esther. I felt like I couldn't even breathe without just saying the name of Jesus. I don't even think I would have survived without God— I couldn't have.'*

*I was his mom but his wife, Esther, was going through something unimaginable. She had left her family, and her country of Canada, to join Arden's life. She was only 18 and had just gone through a fairytale wedding... but that first year was something no one could have imagined. She was trying to save her husband, and I was trying to save my son.*

*We had two passions that converged...and sometimes even collided. But I always told her—just like Esther in the Bible, she had been chosen by God for such a time as this. With the closeness, she could provide as a wife to Arden...I have never seen such strength in a young woman.'*

Speaking of my wife, Esther was there for me in ways that I can hardly describe. She would never look away. I looked so hideous but she was always there for me, touching me, loving me. She and I both felt the peace of God that I should start chemotherapy. They wanted to give it to me as soon as possible if I had any hopes of making it through so that night was my first treatment of a heavy dose of chemo. They told me I would be on a heavy regimen for three months.

But even with our faith, when I look back, there was real family drama around all of this...how wouldn't there be? Esther was facing widowhood as a young wife. My parents might lose their firstborn son. What could be more dramatic than that? It's such a human thing to have frayed emotions. To be shaken to the core... and I know I was. We all were.

## **Beginning the Turnaround**

I stayed at the hospital for a few weeks so that I could be stabilized enough to come home. Amazingly, I started to feel better (not worse) when I started chemo (at least for the first few weeks!). The chemo was beating down the cancer cells and my energy levels were beginning to increase!

But when I did get home for the first time after the treatments, I couldn't walk. My muscles had simply degenerated that much... I felt like a baby. My hair, of course, was falling out. The whole process... it's just traumatizing for everyone because the way you look is so different.

I honestly looked like Gollum. A bald skeleton with growths on my neck still so large they had deformed my facial features. I don't know how Esther still loved me but she did. She had to endure watching her strong husband deteriorate into nothing. But our love only grew stronger through the pain. She would never leave me—even in the ICU, she would sleep next to me every night, in the same hospital bed. I'm tall so we barely fit but she was always by my side. She always said, "We started this together and we're going to finish it together." Now (in the present) I'm on a mission to become the sexiest man alive! Because she deserves me to be!

I remember, as things transitioned away from the heavy doses, my Grandad told Esther, “You know Esther, your husband is beginning to get his handsome looks back. He is starting to look human again.” And she quickly shot back, “Grandad, I’ve always had a handsome husband.”

## 7 Years of Treatments

For nearly seven years I was on chemotherapy. With all the heart that I fought that cancer... it fought back. They called it ‘resistant.’ because it would become accustomed to certain types of chemo. No matter what we threw at it... it just *kept* coming back. This was so unusual for Hodgkin’s lymphoma but so was having three gallons of Roundup spilled over your neck (where the growths were). soon as we could we transitioned from the adult facility to Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital. I was 18, so I could choose which facility to be in.

Since I was still 18 when first diagnosed, I could still be treated in the children’s ward. They gave me the option though. children’s or adults? I chose the children’s. So, for seven years I spent a part of my life there. The Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital is the best of the best, world-renowned. It’s bright and has a happy culture, and we felt like it would be good to be around that environment. It’s almost like ‘the Narnia of hospitals. If I was going back into the throes of treatment, with the IV and the whole thing... why not be in a brighter, more colorful, and hopeful facility? They sing songs, play games, and do everything with a more hopeful feeling. And while it’s difficult watching the kids endure through these things, they handle it with a childlike hope that adults simply don’t have... it’s that childlike hope that changes everything—it feels like healing is truly possible.

But after the initial chemotherapy, when I started to feel better... that didn’t remain. On the low-dose chemotherapy two weeks out of every month—from November 2016 through the Summer of 2022— I usually felt terrible... like I was going through a severe flu. Imagine your bad flu, and multiply that by 10 times. Let’s just say I hate cancer. I came repeatedly close to getting an ‘f\*\*\* cancer’ tattoo but decided against it for health reasons! And because I didn’t want to have to explain it to my daughter (or my grandma!). When I become a billionaire, I’ll just start the ‘Screw Cancer Foundation.’

Going through it though – I’d be lying if I said that I didn’t ask God, “*Why me? Why did I have to go through this?*” I didn’t think that I could be happy without being healthy. But a deep change started happening in my heart. I decided to embrace happiness before I had all the health that I wanted. I changed the question to “*Why not me?*” Because I realized that through all of this, I would be able to help so many people.

And amid all these battles, we had our miracle baby, Gethsemane. We had to fight for that—because the doctors said it was impossible. But now we have this beautiful young lady. What a miracle she was! But I had to fight hopelessness because it was in the middle of my treatments. I had to ask, ‘Will I walk my daughter down the aisle?’ I *had* to win the mental battle, and when I did, I started enjoying my daughter and enjoying life. I had to determine, ‘I AM going to be here. This cancer won’t define me.’

## **I Should Be Dead... But God Had Another Plan**

I came to understand that my identity as a man, and as a man of God, would enable me to fight to my last breath. I wasn't going to just lie down and give up. Like Abraham, I had to be willing to sacrifice Isaac... Esther and I always say that there was a moment when we put everything on the altar before God.

*And that mentality led me to start watching a lot of content from Navy Seals.*

The mental fortress of these men was so inspiring. And I could relate to the cost. The message I was hearing was, *"You can go farther than you ever thought possible if you press yourself and push yourself past your limitations."* I met a good number of Navy seals, and I have read many of their books, and they would say things like, *"You're going through something? Good. You have the chance to learn, grow, and get back up. If you fall, you're not getting anywhere unless you pick yourself back up."*

I'm convinced that going through hardship makes us better if we let it. The Bible clearly says that in this life, we will go through trials and tribulations... but Jesus has overcome the world.

About a year and a half ago, in March of 2022, I started immunotherapy. And then I had a stem cell transplant. My immune system had to be pulled down to nothing and then rebuilt. I was at a normal weight at that time. I knew going through those treatments, that I would get knocked out again. But I had a new mindset now. I decided ahead of time that I was NOT going to allow myself to lose weight the way that I did before during the aggressive chemo... so I forced myself to eat a lot of food. I had sores down my esophagus and GI tract, (it was like having ulcers). Imagine yourself at death's gate, and sleeping through the day, but forcing yourself to eat significant amounts of food and walking a mile each day. I decided not to lose the amounts of muscle mass they told me I would... so I got a personal trainer and began to do workouts even when I felt like I could barely lift my head. I determined I would not be taken down to nothing.

It was a difficult season of treatment then being housebound. I wasn't allowed out for several months as my immune system could not handle it. But they were able to release me early! I was responding so well to the treatments, that they didn't have to finish. They told us they had never seen anyone respond so well!

I was the worst patient. They liked me, but I would pretend I was going through a seizure just for laughs. It wasn't always appreciated by the care staff. But I had to keep my humor. I had to keep laughing. Finding my happiness even in the hardest of circumstances was how I finally broke the back of that thing. My scans came back clear. I was 100% cancer-free!

Once I was out, I knew that I had a message. I had a passion that I had to share. Of course, we've reached the women... but now it's time to reach the men!

## **My Message for this Generation: Join 'Undefeated Men'**

If I can overcome, any man can overcome. But with the launch of my 'Undefeated Men' brand, I want to make something clear out of the gate. I'm not saying that men don't get defeated. We all fall but being *undefeated* is a mentality. In Christ, we are undefeated...so when we fall, we get back up. We can let the difficult things we go through create determination in us!



Undefeated Men is about physical, mental, and spiritual breakthroughs. Cal, a retired Marine, (and my uncle) has helped me launch this. He's a friend and mentor, has overcome his physical challenges, and is in extraordinary shape. Yes, we have health products, but UM is about more than that. It's about men reaching their full potential and getting the encouragement that they need.

We, as men, need to be the best that we can be for our children, for our wives, for our families, for our nation, and for our God. We must push one another to our limits. We want to do away with 'toxic men' being looked at as good examples...and we want to set an example of true, Godly masculinity. The original inspiration, in many ways, for this is my Great Grandad Bowen. He was a world champion sheep shearer. He always said, "**A Good Man's Never Stuck.**"

Undefeated Men has a code to live by:

*Embrace responsibility.*

*Care for others.*

*Be dangerous.*

*Choose to be faithful.*

*Do the right thing when no one is looking.*

Visualize the battle scenes from movies when there is an unstoppable force of men... It's inspiring. We are going to be like that. We, as men, are going to do all kinds of incredible things. We are going to encourage men to embrace their highest potential. It starts with pushing for greater health, but it goes much further. Stay tuned for all the exciting things we will be unrolling in in the weeks and months to come!

### **More Information On Glyphosate**

See *glyphosate* (Roundup) studies and more information [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

## [Visit Arden's Website ~ Undefeated Men](#)

UNDEFEATED MEN is more than just words; it's action. We will offer inspiration, motivation, cutting-edge products, practical supplements, battle-tested fitness programming, and effective dietary regimens. We also seek to develop unity between men and women that resembles the steadfast connection in my eight-year marriage (and Cal's twenty-eight-year marriage). We believe that when men and women choose to unite for a common purpose, this can become a powerful force of positive transformation in society!

UNDEFEATED MEN is the culmination of a heartfelt passion to call men to rise and conquer themselves ... to realize their full potential by becoming the best version of themselves through honest, courageous, and committed self-assessment. Once we humbly orient ourselves to our issues, we can develop the solutions that will allow us to realize our true potential. From there, gentlemen, we can change the world!



## [Trim Healthy Indulgence ~ Esther Allison](#)

*If you dream of indulgent baking flowing from your kitchen, this book is your guide. It contains over 50 gluten and sugar-free recipes (including some dairy-free options) to celebrate life's most memorable moments.*

*Every delicious and healthful creation has step-by-step, full-color instructional photos to hold your hand as you create your sweet artistry.*

*Your cakes, cookies, tarts, and other baked goods will begin to look as beautiful as they taste. Whether you're an adept baker who wants to bake more healthfully or just a beginner, Esther's recipes will bring your healthy baked creations to life!*

[Click here for more Trim Healthy Poddy Summaries](#)