

WORKSHEET 5 · CHAPTER FIVE · IT’S NOT OVER WHEN THEY SAY YOU’RE DONE

When “Done” Isn’t Done

An invitation to step away from the pressure to be better, and honestly notice where you actually are.

One of the hardest parts of life after cancer is realizing that the finish line you expected may not exist. Treatment may end, but your body, mind, emotions, relationships and spirit may still be catching up.

This exercise is an invitation to step away from the pressure to be “better” and honestly notice where you are now — not where you, or anyone else, thinks you should be.

PART I

The Finish Line Myth

Complete these sentences honestly.

I thought I would be “back to normal” by...

I told myself that once _____ was over, everything would settle.

Other people expected me to be better by...

I feel pressure to finish...

The voice in my head says, "You should be over this by now because..."

Pause. Now ask yourself:

- Who set that timeline?
- Was it realistic?
- Did my body ever agree to that timeline?

What has my body actually needed instead?

PART 2

What Still Hurts (Without Judgment)

Instead of asking "*Why am I not better yet?*" ask:

- What still feels unfinished in me?
- What still flares up physically?
- What still triggers me emotionally?
- What conversations am I still avoiding?
- What losses have I not fully grieved?

What's still hard

List without filtering.

What my body might be saying

"I'm exhausted" might mean "I need rest, not discipline."

This is not a list of failures. It's a map of what still needs care.

PART 3

Identifying Invisible Timers

Many survivors live under invisible countdown clocks. Tick any that resonate.

- ☐ I feel guilty when I talk about my pain.
- ☐ I minimize my symptoms so others won't feel uncomfortable.
- ☐ I compare my healing timeline to someone else's.
- ☐ I feel pressure to "be inspiring."
- ☐ I pretend I'm better than I am.
- ☐ I push myself to prove I'm okay.
- ☐ I avoid talking about lingering symptoms.

What would happen if I stopped pretending?

What am I afraid would change?

What would it feel like to remove the timer completely?

PART 4

Redefining Progress

In this chapter, healing was no longer measured by "normal." Write your own definition.

Healing *meant*...

Healing *now means*...

For example:

- Telling the truth about my limits.
- Resting without apology.

- Saying no.
- Asking for help.
- Living honestly in a changed body.
- Allowing grief to resurface without shame.

PART 5

A Commitment

Keep these short. Specific. Livable.

I release the expectation that I should be done with...

Instead, I give myself permission to...

For example: move at my body's pace · grieve without rushing · speak honestly · stop performing recovery.

A Gentle Reflection

Place your hand on your body and ask:

If my body could speak without interruption, what would it say right now?

Write the answer without editing it.

This worksheet accompanies Chapter Five of *Reluctant Warrior: A Memoir & Breast Cancer Emotional Survival Guide* by Dr. Christina Hibbert. It is a reflective exercise, not therapy or medical care. If it brings up more than you expected, that makes sense — please consider bringing it to someone who can sit with you in it.