

# Disempowered

Category: Tough Choices

written by Victoria King | September 23, 2017

“So, what do you want to do?” asks the man with the pointed nose and the stethoscope around his neck.

*Hmmm. Swim with dolphins? Eat a steaming bowl of spaghetti? Dance with the sun on my face? Yes. All of those, I think to myself. But, no. They're not the options on offer, not any more. My interrogator's nose is waiting. His grey eyes assess me from under folded lids.*

“Tell me again,” I manage.

The nose breathes in sharply, a triangle raised in the air, like a shark's fin.

“Chemotherapy? Radiotherapy, in a lead-lined room? Or do nothing?”

Hmmm again. What *do* I want?

What I really want, Mr. Doctor, is some advice. In fact, I want to wrap that stethoscope around the flaps of your neck and squeeze the advice out of you. Not just any old advice. But advice of the professional, researched, academic kind. Peer-reviewed, scientific, grounded-in-theory type advice. I don't need to feel this medical textbook version of empowerment. The forty-something kilos of my body, my ragged breath, the slash across my neck and the leather satchel stitches that hold it in place snicker and jeer at the very thought.

My tired brain wilts in my head.

“Do nothing,” I choose. A nonchoice, which is supposed to make me feel better.

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