

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



I am writing this first letter of 2010 on New Year's Day, following my return from a few days respite in New York City. One event that took place in Times Square during that time was the Third Annual Good Riddance Day. Eager participants brought documents of various sizes, colors, and shapes depicting something or someone they would like to rid from their life—a bad boss, rejected lover, disappointing sports team (eg, the NY Giants of 2009), painful memory, or overweight status—and tossed them into a giant shredder. This variant on the New Year's Resolution brought out hundreds who sought to purge themselves of whatever.

The problem with that approach is obviously that shredding the past does nothing to improve your chances for a better tomorrow. The little slivers of paper do not coalesce into a wish list or an action. 2009 was an odd year, a challenging year. Looking back upon it, there is a lot more shredding that should take place. I would start with the terrorists, although the most recent terrorist shredded his own underpants, so there is little I can add to that. Then there are those elected representatives in our government who obstruct rather than facilitate progress; I would replace them with more sensible representatives of the people and for the people. There are those in the media/news industry who care more for sensation than accuracy and privacy. I would shred the continuous barrage of new regulations from NCI, CMS, PhRMA, and the myriad other organizations that spend more time creating new headaches than developing better methods of improving medical care and developing safer and more effective medications. Shredded would be those new drugs that do little to improve on what is already available, but which are being pushed to meet the financial bottom line.

Let's also throw in others whose aberrant behavior is in indirect proportion to their income, thinking of Kanye West wresting Taylor Swift's Video Music Award from her young grasp.

I would try to toss in my grumpiness, but there seems to be a never-ending supply.

Out the other end would come a sensible health care plan that covers those who merit protection, yet doesn't negatively impact on those who have adequate insurance; a streamlined, coordinated clinical trials and drug development program resulting in better therapies to improve the outcome for our patients; a burgeoning economy; an end to wars in various foreign lands. We would find the cancellation of all reality shows and the return of their casts to well-deserved obscurity, and redistribution of excessive salaries of arrogant sports figures to educators, health care workers, and the underserved. And of course, we will be pleased to receive another year of excellent articles for the readers of *Clinical Advances in Hematology & Oncology*.

Most importantly, I would toss in the wasted opportunities to show kindness and the failure to spend time with loved ones, and I hope that with the New Year will come the chance to bring us closer to them.

Whether "two thousand 10," or "twenty 10," or whatever you choose to call it, will bring a greater sense of peace and harmony remains to be seen. We can but dream.

In the meantime, I send my sincerest wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous year ahead.

Until next month...

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bruce D. Cheson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bruce D. Cheson, MD