



2019 HONOREE

## Gregory Leakes

As a self-taught businessman, public speaker, business consultant and now a television personality, Gregg Leakes has become known on a national platform due to the success of a television show where he played an important role as the "voice of reason and wisdom" to the other cast mates on the show. He has delivered positive messages stating "everything that happens to you in life is useful towards your personal development for success."

In no other area was this more important than in his journey and recovery with colon cancer. That journey began on Cinco de Mayo after experiencing strong, unusual stomach pains at a local restaurant, unlike any other symptoms he had experienced prior. After several hospital tests, he was informed that he would need immediate surgery in order to survive. After discussions with many doctors and specialists, he made the decision to move forward with the surgery as recommended.

For Gregg, the greatest obstacle of his cancer experience was first being able to truly accept that he had cancer and then determining that it would not be the end of his life. Being strong for his family and himself was of the utmost importance, and he honed that strength in exercising his faith every day.

After surgery and undergoing chemotherapy, Gregg was declared cancer-free a year after his initial diagnosis. Gregg maintains that his strong Christian faith and his belief in God, the support of friends, his wife, and his family, and the confidence he had in his doctors all played a role in his successful triumph.

Gregg has honed a successful career largely through his persistence and determination for bettering himself and other people. His journey with cancer has given him the unexpected opportunity for learning and sharing with others, thus being a vehicle of inspiration and hope for others undergoing similar challenges. Gregg's advice for anyone with cancer or touched by cancer with loved ones is to "NEVER give up. Have Faith and let your Faith have it work in you." He also adds that it's imperative to have a network of family and friends for support at every turn and that organizations such as American Cancer Society can offer important assistance and be a resource for the cancer journey. Proceeding exactly as doctors ask, keeping an active mind on positive things, and eating and resting well are also crucial to success. "And don't," advises Gregg "try to understand everything at first; all you need to know will come to you as you need to know it."

With those words of wisdom gained after a successful fight with cancer, Gregg believes that people suffering from this disease can also have a positive, safe and healthy journey just as he did.