

Breast Cancer Article of Support

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Life Throws a Curve Ball

My article relating to breast cancer is one of self-indulgence. I found the writing of it cathartic in that it helped me to come to terms with my illness. It is my heartfelt hope that this article will afford any fellow sufferers some measure of comfort or support. This period was an intensely emotional time for loved ones, close friends, and myself. If this health issue has touched you in any way, I hope that my article can help to bring a degree of solace ...

This article was originally written by the author of pammies.com and first published in 2001.

Myriad Emotions

I like many women, and men before me have had a health scare; I was diagnosed as having "Breast Cancer." It is no respecter of gender. I was one of the lucky ones; it could have been a lot worse than it was. I am not after sympathy here - that is the last thing I need. What is required on my part, and that of any other sufferer, is to accomplish something that at the time seems practically impossible; that of positive thinking. If one dwells too much on this issue, your morale sinks even lower, and the healing process takes longer. So how does one deal with this profound happening?

Positive thinking has to be one of the hardest things to achieve. We can all present a brave face when we are required to; but maintaining that "up-beat," when your cosy little world has been shattered into a thousand pieces is one of the hardest things to deal with.

I have found the best thing to do is to talk about it. Unfortunately, some people put up barriers, and treat the topic of cancer as "taboo," and one not to be faced. Some women quickly change the subject, while others talk about it - maybe they have had a similar experience. Alternatively, they may know someone who has been affected by it. Surprisingly enough, I found men could talk relatively easily about the subject, and without embarrassment. Their interest stems from the concern that it could happen to their wives, loved ones, or someone of their own gender and they feel a need to understand all the facts. I have read books, and gathered information from the Internet, so I feel pretty much informed on the subject. All this information can be somewhat daunting you read about long-term prospects and wonder: "What If?" As always on any health issue, you can read about the good, and the bad.

I have learned to challenge everything that goes on regarding my body. I have had my bad days; however, in the main they are good. You learn to play harder, and laugh more; in fact, you simply get on with living. One of the hardest things is observing the pain on loved ones faces when the topic is approached. Nevertheless, things have to be faced, and each family member or friend copes differently. Some people cannot come to terms with the situation. I have lost touch with people that I had termed close friends, and people I thought of as just being acquaintances; have in turn been supportive of me. I have been one of the fortunate ones, with the dedicated guidance and support from a truly loving family. Indeed, they have helped to pull me through this ordeal.

So how do you face these "myriad of emotions" you are going through? You need to take stock. How are you are feeling, not the physical pain, but the emotional. It is difficult to come to terms with - believe me I know. People cannot fully comprehend how you feel, unless they have been through it themselves. I can remember the first time I looked in the mirror thinking I was incomplete. How could my husband still want me - or my children not turn away in disgust at the sight of my body? It is difficult to remain untouched by it all but remember you are still the self-same person. Perhaps you are a wife, and a mother. If so, you

are loved and needed. If you are single, it is to be hoped that you have loved ones' that understand how you are feeling; besides giving you all the moral support that you need at this trying time.

Initially my feelings were that of self-pity: I could not think clearly or face my future. Talking to fellow sufferers this is something they had all experienced. Yet a few months down the line, I had managed to develop my positive thinking to the full. In truth, I had finally stopped feeling sorry for myself. I have to admit this was the hardest emotion of all to cope with. The "Why Me" feeling was especially strong. I have wept myself to sleep many a night. However, I quickly began to realize that this kind of behaviour was not being fair on my loved ones, and I had to fight so very hard against it. I soon realised that you really must make the best of whatever fate throws at you. Live for every moment, and appreciate your life to the full. Try to stop thinking of what has happened to you, "I know it's not easy." Start to think of what you can do with your life. I certainly look at life differently enjoying it for what it is, and what it has to offer me for now, and the future.

It is an appalling thing that has happened to you. However, if you fill your time feeling sorry for yourself you will not only destroy your life: but the lives of those who love, and care for you. My only hope is that if you are troubled with the demons, which this illness brings; my words can be of some comfort to you knowing that you are not alone. There is always help and support available to you. So please, make use of these organizations. They really can help you in providing strength, and comfort, in your hours of need and support...