

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Angie, and I am sure you hear a lot of stories that start out in a similar way. I have had cancer, and it has touched my life in this way or that way. I have a family, which I do! I have 3 wonderful children, a granddaughter and a fantastic extended family that I love with all my heart. My journey from the time I was diagnosed until this very moment has truly been a battle that I know many people thought would not leave me standing out in front, dusting myself off, going "whew NOW THAT WAS ONE BUGGER OF A RIDE!" **AND** doing it with a grin on my face!

My second life began June 22nd, 2009 when I was diagnosed at age 35 with aggressive, stage 3 colorectal cancer. When I heard those words, I whispered quietly, "BUT I'M NOT DONE YET." Tears filled my eyes, overwhelming thoughts flooded my mind. This was my welcoming into "My New Life". My first life as I knew it ended. It didn't stop, it wasn't paused, it ended! The worst words I thought I ever heard was, "you have cancer". But then I heard it again, October 2010; stage 2 invasive breast cancer. And again July 2011 stage 1 cervical cancer, and yet again April 2012 stage 4 metastatic colorectal cancer to my right lung. Numerous surgeries, chemotherapies and radiation treatments later... **HERE I STAND.** As an Army Veteran, the cancer messed with the wrong woman. I laced on my boots picked up my head, and wore the best smile I had. I put one foot in front of the other with sass & passion.

Through all of that, anyone who knows me is well aware of how much I love to smile, giggle and laugh! I have chosen to call these reasons through the years, "Giggle points". I have found a ton of giggle points to keep busy! (Giggle points have been my saving grace in the most serious of situations) For example, "pole dancing" with the chemo poles at the hospital! Or the poor lady at the post office asking me if I just got my hair done? (I was wearing a scarf because I was bald!) Or the unknown man walking down the hospital hallway telling me "that is the most beautiful smile I have seen all day!" Kudos to you fella, I have no eyebrows, no eyelashes, no make-up and bags under my eyes that is the equivalent to those I would need on a 3 week cruise to Greece!

What I have really enjoyed is showing other people that a patient, survivor, or "liver", doesn't have to be angry all the time, we don't have to "look" sick or miserable. You can **CHOOSE** to take control, embrace your life and recognize its worth. I lost all my hair, no big deal, I had a chance to wear beautiful scarves, and a chance for my hair to grow back dark and curly... ok so I got waves, close enough, but most of all my drive is to help and encourage others to laugh! Who says you need to hurt to truly feel alive. Try laughing it doesn't hurt so much. After a while memories of pain will fade. But I can remember some pretty comical situations that still put a smile on my face. It's crazy to say I have enjoyed some moments of this journey and what I have learned is that I have found life, and the face of cancer has given me an insight, **LIVE** truly, live the life you are given, open your eyes, your mind and make life the gift you have been given, **MAKE** it everything you want it to be. Don't just dream, live your dreams out! Make them real make them more than just a possibility! All the possibilities are there and I have a lifetime to do it!

I continue to grow everyday into the person I want to become and finally just be. I believe in being an inspiration for other people going through what I have faced and approach life, looking forward with happiness in our hearts instead of dread and fear. I have used the title of Miss Living Pink, Tacoma 2011 and the cover girl on the HER Times October 2013 issue to do just that! Remember that endless life experiences are waiting for us despite whatever life hands us. I desire to inspire others with and without a disease to not forget how to live or let life pass by unnoticed. Do not wait for happiness to land in your lap. Make happy, happen. Don't forget to smile, and look for a giggle point every day. Revisit your inner child and maybe you'll find yourself swinging on a trapeze, jumping out of a plane or swimming somewhere tropical, maybe just enjoying a long overdue visit with friends, or simply catching a snow flake. Be mindful of life surrounding you and enjoy every 2nd, 3rd or 4th chance you are given!

Recently I have gone back to school, achieving my Certification as a Natural Health Practitioner and on my way to a Dr. of Naturopathy and to having a practice with my best friend and supporter. In addition I do Pranic Energy work for those in need and who desire have lifestyle changes and options available to them. I am LIVING my dream to help others, it's my purpose!

I have immense gratitude and have gained priceless friendships in Linked By Pink. Without the help and continued support of these women in my life, I honestly don't know how I would have handled some very delicate times. I am truly thankful for every relationship and smile I have been blessed with in this group. I can only hope I give as much as I get. All My Love to LBP and its Members! <3

~ Angie Janosky
Ripley, New York