

I learned I had breast cancer in March 2009, at age 34. I am a problem solver, so my first instinct was to figure out what was within my control now to fight this disease. I wanted to prevent it, or any other kind of cancer, from ever returning (after a bit of crying with my husband, of course). One way to tackle a problem is to determine the root cause. Unfortunately, this quest ended quickly for me as the root cause of cancer is unknown. It's probably the result of a multitude of things that add up in the wrong way...genetics, environmental pollutants, diet, lifestyle, etc. So what's a girl to do? I quickly latched onto simple changes I could make, like drink more water and fit more veggies into my diet. I figured these things could only help, and they gave me a sense of control. Then, I tried to relax and not put so much pressure on myself. At my leisure, I continue to read, learn, and make small adjustments towards an overall healthier life. It's fascinating stuff to me!

Determining my medical treatment plan was very difficult because there are so many options and considerations as a young woman. The most important thing I feel I did was take my time making these decisions. I researched like crazy and in the process, I found several amazing people resources I never knew existed and I will forever be grateful for. Thank you...you know who you are! Ultimately, I had a bilateral mastectomy with immediate reconstruction followed by chemotherapy.

I focus on the positives as much as possible. You have to. Early stage breast cancer is very curable, and there is a ton of research focused on it. If I had to get cancer, I would choose breast cancer. I've never doubted that I'll beat it. It is a bump in the road of life for me to learn from. I'm young with no kids and a supportive husband, so I have the time and energy to focus on me. I have found good health care that I'm confident in. I take care of myself, so from the start I've been in good fighting form to take this disease on head first. Now, as I go through chemotherapy, it's a bonus to not have to shave my legs or elsewhere. Getting ready for work is a snap when you don't have to do your hair; I get compliments from strangers on my hair (my wig)...a first...ha ha! And, I'm pampered on treatment days to the point where I look forward to them.

Next steps are radiation and more reconstruction surgeries. The journey continues and I am traveling it one day at a time.

"The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly." - Buddha

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Featured in May of 2010