

Hearing you have a cancer diagnosis once is scary enough, but hearing it again seven years later really makes you wonder if it's going to, ultimately, get the best of you. I was first diagnosed in February 2003 with Stage 0-DCIS Breast Cancer. I had only been working at Edinboro University for 3 months when I got the news and, although it was shocking, the prognosis was good. We had "caught it early" and eight months and four surgeries later I was deemed "cancer free!" That, I thought, was the end of my own personal battle with cancer.

Then, six months into my new job at Gannon University and almost seven years to the day, my doctor called my husband, Shane, and I into his office on February 8th. I had been experiencing pain in my left hip and, although I felt like a hypochondriac, once you've had a cancer diagnosis there's always this little voice inside your head that whispers, "What if?" So, listen to your body! An abnormal x-ray led to an abnormal bone scan which finally led to a bone biopsy that confirmed the worst. Breast cancer cells were now in the bone of my left hip, sternum and thoracic spine. Looks like I'll be retiring at Gannon, because with this kind of a track record with new jobs, my husband says I'm not allowed to change jobs ever again! So, I underwent 2 more surgeries in March and started treatments every 3 weeks which will continue for at least a year.

I'm not alone in this journey though, which is both good and bad. Friends have found themselves in the same boat as me; Matt, Pat, Lori, Ted, Lisa, Kim, Chrissy and LBP ladies. Hopefully, together, we'll all be able to help one another successfully navigate through this. I know I've charted my "rhumb line" and set my sights on the horizon and the point at which I've put this cancer thing in my wake once again and hope everyone else can do the same. Grandpa Alex, Grandpa Butch, D.J., Becky, Coach Corbett, Renae, Brian, Uncle Jerry and Sharon; I love and miss you all and think of you often as I sail these waters. I certainly don't claim to understand this disease or why it keeps claiming our best and our brightest, but it's the memories of those above who have lost their battle along with the rest of my family & friends who are still with me that make it possible for me to keep fighting and make sticking around for as long as I can so worthwhile. There's no way I'm going to let this thing get the best of me! So, anytime anything but positive thoughts enter my mind, I simply remind myself of the "battle cry" given to me the day after my Uncle Jerry's funeral when my brother, Michael, gathered us all together to pray. "I believe I have received my healing!" And I pray others receive theirs as well.

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