

I was diagnosed with cancer in 2005, and I was 36 years old.

I went for several tests, which led to more tests. Finally, the specialist came in and asked, "why are you here alone?" I had not even thought of bringing someone with me. She told me that I had cancer and that I should go to the scheduler for surgery. I was in a fog and cried the whole way home. I tried to tell my husband. I told my children, four and eight at the time. My eight-year-old daughter asked two questions "Am I going to get it" and "Are you going to die". I honestly didn't know the answer to either question, but when I looked into her wide eyes, I knew I had to tell her "no" to both.

I ended up having a lumpectomy, and then a double mastectomy with total reconstruction.

I knew that I needed to be aggressive so that those around me, especially my two daughters, wouldn't worry about me. Thinking back, I remember the pain, how long it took to feel like myself again, but mostly I remember how incredibly blessed I have been. God carried me the whole way. I have been blessed by family and friends who were there for us in so many ways. I have been blessed to share my journey and support others through theirs.

I hate cancer and a part of me fears its ugly return, but the bigger part of me is thankful for all I have learned on this journey. You are never alone

~Dawn Fischer Sokol  
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