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Kim Becking

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Kim Becking

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EDITOR'S LETTER

IT'S YOUR JOURNEY

“Live in the day, not yesterday, not tomorrow,
but in the best of today.” — BEVERLY VOTE

Dear friends,

Mindfulness, mind-body, and meditation are words that are fast becoming every day terms in the cancer healing journey. Many breast cancer thrivers have mentioned they have trouble meditating and want to know more about “mindfulness”. I believe this is a very important subject for healing. Developing this ability that we all can do was one of the most life-saving things that I did for myself. This began over 20 years ago and at a time that mindfulness wasn't a common term as it is in today's healing environments. Learning mindfulness helped make my prayers a deeper connection and as answers to my prayers began showing up in the days following my prayers, I began to recognize it was because of learning how to be mindful so I could see things not from a place of the traumas of cancer but from a place where I could see my healing answers in a better light. Learning mindfulness and meditation isn't as difficult as these concepts may imply.

With the help of Dr Kemper's latest book, *Authentic Healing: A Practical Guide for Caregivers*, we can better understand these concepts and how to apply them in our lives. She didn't write the book as a healing resource just for professional care providers, but also as a valuable introduction for all of us into the field of the new medicine emerging in some of the most acclaimed integrative cancer centers across the country. Dr Kemper's article in this issue provides simple suggestions to begin to feel the calm, peace and trust that come from learning mindfulness as a daily practice in your life. I can tell the days I have taken the time to pray and meditate and the days that I don't. You can gauge for yourself the days you engage in this quiet sacred connection and the days you don't.

In cover story, Kim Becking's definition for the term “inner cleavage” is so true: “It's that inner spirit, that inner cleavage, that was daring me to keep living - the beauty, confidence and courage that exists when everything else is stripped away.” After breast cancer

and a heart-breaking divorce, it was in that space that nudged Kim to keep living and to love herself and her life without criticism and was able to begin to trust life again.



For too many women diagnosed with breast cancer, the financial fallout is devastating. BCW is on a mission to help restore financial well-being for women, men and families after being diagnosed with breast cancer. BCW is very excited to launch a financial wellness webinar series with Jane Honeck. Jane created a valuable webinar program specifically for the financial challenges that arise for those who have faced trauma in their lives and for those who wish to learn how to have more abundance in their lives. Jane has worked with multi-millionaires, bankruptcies, couples, singles, and large and small businesses to bring balance and financial wellness into lives across the country. Jane is excited to share her decades of compassion, understanding and life skills with all of us in this transformational webinar series.

It will be a record attendance on the 10th Annual Thrivers Cruise. I invite you to join in to celebrate YOU and your journey! Making *Life Friends* and breathing in the awesomeness of the seas restores and rejuvenates our spirit.

It is my prayer for each of us to experience the greatest joy possible each and every day for all the days of our lives.

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Mental Readiness

PREPARING FOR HEALING

BY KATHI J KEMPER M.D., M.P.H

After more than thirty years, I'm finally coming out of the closet. I've been to medical school, completed a residency and a fellowship, taught at prestigious medical schools, received NIH grants, conducted research, held leadership positions in national medical societies, and published more than 150 papers in peer reviewed scientific journals. But now I'm coming out as a "healer."

Although I graduated as a doctor and learned many useful skills, I really went to medical school to learn how to be a healer. I didn't. It's taken decades and guidance from some of the nation's best healers, but I've finally learned enough to write about what I wish I'd learned when I was that young medical student who wanted to know how to heal. *Authentic Healing: A Practical Guide for Caregivers* was written for both professional and personal caregivers who want a basic introduction to healing from a reputable, reliable resource.

What I learned over these decades is that we can gain confidence for healing when we

prepare ourselves physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

For the purpose of this article, we will briefly focus on using mental practices to prepare for healing but in-depth knowledge about preparing one's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being are available in the book and other resources as well. Mental practices or exercises share the generic name of meditation (mental training). The word meditation comes from the same root as the word medicine. Both historical experience and modern science suggest that meditation has important benefits when practiced regularly.

The two main types of meditation are:

1. *Concentration or focused attention:* A conscious focus on a desired intention, object, word, phrase, sound, or image; returning to the intended focus when the mind wanders

2. *Mindfulness:* Intentional, curious, friendly, warm-hearted nonjudgmental awareness of and insight into the ever-changing milieu of current experiences, thoughts, sensations, and emotions.

Both kinds of meditation offer a stronger

sense of wellbeing and inner tranquility, less anxiety, and better concentration. I recommend to learn and practice both types. You may find that one is easier than another. Embrace the paradox of remaining centered and grounded while extending your awareness, sensitivity, and compassion to yourself and others.

Meditation directions sound simple, but the challenge lies in the actual practice. As soon as we try to meditate, we find our minds wandering or judgments arise. On average, it takes less than eight seconds for our minds to wander to something else. This is normal.

The key to successful practice is to notice when it happens and then to gently return our awareness to the original intention. There are a number of excellent books, CDs, DVDs, MP3 files, apps for smart devices, YouTube videos on meditation, and electronic courses available online (See the Ohio State University online course on Mind-Body Skills Training for Resilience, Effectiveness, and Mindfulness, www.mind-bodyhealth.osu.edu which lists resources). Additional help from a teacher, coach, or counselor, or practice group can be very useful.

CONCENTRATION-BASED OR FOCUSED-ATTENTION MEDITATION

What are possible objects of intentional attention? Some people focus on a physical object, such as a candle, a sound, or word. Some people focus on an activity like breathing, or a part of the body, like the heart or space between the eyebrows or the tip of the nose. Find a practice that suits you, and practice regularly to develop a deep sense of its benefits for improving attention and the meta-cognitive skill of being aware of your awareness.

One common type of concentration-based meditation is focusing on a single word, such as “calm,” “relax,” “one,” or “peace.”

The most famous medical proponent of concentration meditation is Herbert Benson, M.D., the Harvard cardiologist and author of *The Relaxation Response* who founded the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Over 35 years, Dr. Benson and his colleagues have documented the profound physical, mental, and emotional benefits of simple meditation practices, such as repeating the number “one.” Concentration meditation builds attention, concentration, and confidence, as well as a sense of calm and peacefulness. It is similar to breathing meditation, but instead of counting breaths, simply repeat the number “one” or another word or phrase. When the mind wanders, gently bring it back to your chosen word.

To enhance the benefits, you can focus on a positive emotion, such as appreciation. You could also focus on a positive expectation or affirmation of hope—“I’m getting better; I can feel myself healing; help is on the way; yes, we can.” You can also focus on a prayer or a short phrase of scripture to enhance the spiritual benefits of meditation.

Long-term meditation practice actually changes brain structure and function—it increases activity in the left-sided anterior prefrontal cortex (a pattern associated with positive moods) and the putamen (a part of the brain involved in attention and learning). Just as body builders develop larger muscles with practice, long-term meditators develop thicker, more active areas in the parts of the brain devoted to attention, processing, planning, and positive moods. Regular meditation practice leads to improved ability to cope, reduced pain, reduced anxiety, and enhanced immune function.

Here are three simple steps for concentration meditation.



Kathi J Kemper, M.D., M.P.H.

Concentration Meditation

1. Find a place where you will not be disturbed for the period of your meditation; sit comfortably upright or recline with your spine straight so you feel supported and stable; set a timer so you don't have to look at a clock.

2. Pick a single object, word, phrase, emotion, or action on which to focus. Breathe in a relaxed, normal fashion. You don't have to take especially deep breaths, but you may notice your breathing gradually slows as you practice.

3. When your mind wanders, recognize it, refrain from self-criticism, and gently return your attention to your intended focus.

You may imagine your mind like an enthusiastic puppy you are taking for a walk. The puppy sees a squirrel (a sensation, thought, memory, plan, fantasy, or emotion) and darts toward it. You gently remind it to “heel.” It does for a minute, and then it spots a leaf (another distracting thought or sensation) and darts toward that. You again remind it to “heel.” Soon, it hears another dog (another distraction, like wondering if this is a waste of time and how much longer we have to do this), and it dashes to find a new friend. Again, “heel.” Soon, the puppy mind, or as some call it, “monkey mind,” learns to attend to the chosen object of attention, and concentration becomes effortless.

Mindfulness or Insight Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a way of bringing your attention to the present moment, freeing your mind from ruminating about the past,

judging anything, or worrying about the future. In mindfulness meditation, one is simply quietly aware of what is happening in the body, emotions, or thoughts, with kind curiosity, without judging those experiences, simply noticing how quickly the mind darts from physical sensation to emotion to thoughts, back to an emotion, on to thoughts of the past or future. As you notice a deviation from the present, simply notice it and return to awareness of the constantly changing present moment.

Mindfulness meditation is about being fully engaged in the present. The best-known scientific proponent of this form of meditation is Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., who founded the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Kabat-Zinn and his colleagues globally have conducted numerous studies showing that mindfulness meditation improves anxiety, attention, mood, sleep, and stress.

There are three keys to mindfulness practice: intention, attitude, and attention.

1. *Intention:* Have a clear intention to focus on the present moment.

2. *Attitude:* Maintain a sense of curiosity and an open, accepting attitude about whatever emerges in one's perceptions, sensations, thoughts, or emotions during practice.

3. *Attention:* Focus on the present experience; when attention wanders to another time or place, return to present awareness, gently and without self-condemnation.

Body scan and *sitting meditation* are two easy ways to practice mindfulness.

1. *Body scan:* For this practice, start with focusing on one tiny part of your body, such as your little toe. Be aware of any physical sensations in your little toe. Now move to the other toes, the rest of the foot, and so on up to the top of your head. Take your time. Just notice the sensations. You don't need to label them or judge whether they are good or bad. The focus is on awareness.

You may notice that sensations change in unexpected ways. If you start thinking about something else, simply return your awareness to where you left off and begin again. Experienced meditators can take forty-five to sixty minutes to complete a body scan. Take your time. Do not worry if you take longer or shorter time than others. The OSU Center for Integrative Health and Wellness offers free guided practices for the body scan that you can download to your smart device from www.osu.edu/mindfulness. Similar re-

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2. Sitting meditation: For this meditation, sit in a comfortable position. Become aware of your breathing, the sounds in the room, the quality of light, aromas, and other perceptions. Imagine that you are a three-month-old baby who does not yet have names for things, so you can just observe without labeling or judging. When a thought other than your current perception enters your mind, notice it, and return to observing and perceiving the current moment.

Similarly, emotions need not be rejected or avoided; just note the emotions that arise. Neither pursue nor flee them. Simply observe in a curious, neutral, detached way. When judgments or criticisms arise, similarly notice them and set them aside. Soon you will notice how quickly thoughts and judgments come and go. What remains is the awareness of awareness.

3. Movement: Dr. Kabat-Zinn, the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health, and others include gentle hatha yoga and walking meditation as a type of mindfulness meditation practice.

Others might include tai chi or chi gong exercises. These kinds of exercises are typically done very slowly and gently and can be readily adapted or modified if discomfort is encountered. Slow, conscious movement that is not aimed specifically at achieving any goal other than awareness of the movement itself can provide the same benefits as sitting and body scan meditations. That is, it can improve memory, attention, concentration, and mood, while decreasing worry and obsessive thoughts.

Mindfulness can be incorporated into any other kind of exercise, whether it is weightlifting, swimming, or running. It can also be included in other daily activities—eating, washing dishes, brushing teeth, participating in conversations, gardening, creating art or music, answering the phone. Eventually, you may want to bring mindful awareness to every moment of your life.

Gaining experience with a range of practices will help you select those that are most helpful for you in different situations. Not everyone is a visual person. Even if you don't visualize easily, you might want to practice these exercises a few times — you never know when they might come in handy. Practice regularly to develop your skills and deepen your sense of well-being.

The practices of mindfulness and meditation have endless inter-connecting physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits including:

- Lowers stress
- Improves attention and focus
- Improves decision making skills
- Increases positive brain functions
- Supports being more present to the needs of our body
- Improves psychological well-being
- Improves sleep patterns
- Helps guard against depression
- Helps with resistance against pain
- Helps boost our immune system
- Reduces our negative self talk
- Improves memory
- Helps us to manage distractions
- Enhances self esteem
- Increases open-mindedness
- Reduces overwhelm, worry and anxiety
- Helps make us better humans.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Kemper is the Director of the Center for Integrative Health and Wellness and a Professor of Pediatrics at the Ohio State University. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago, UNC-Chapel Hill (for MD, MPH and Preventive Medicine residency), and the University of Wisconsin Pediatric Residency. Dr. Kemper has served on the faculty of the University of Washington, Yale, and Harvard University, and has founded three Centers for Integrative

Medicine: Boston Children's Hospital, Wake Forest University, and the Ohio State University. She has published over 160 peer-reviewed research papers and four books for the public (The Holistic Pediatrician; Mental Health Naturally; Addressing ADD Naturally, Authentic Healing: A Practical Guide for Caregivers.) She is Past President of the Academic Pediatric Association, and she founded the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Integrative Medicine. She serves as the Editor in Chief of the international journal, Complementary Therapies in Medicine. Dr. Kemper is recognized internationally as the founder of the field of integrative pediatrics, and is frequently consulted by media including the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Newsweek, ABC News, the Wall Street Journal, Redbook, and USA Today.

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FINANCIAL WELLNESS

After Breast Cancer

BY MOLLY MACDONALD

This issue we meet Jane Honeck, CPA, PFS, PCC who understands that the problem with money is not about the money at all, but something deeper.

As a Money Coach, Jane helps people move toward long-term financial change by recognizing the areas of deep beliefs that underlie their relationship with money, and coaching to positive outcomes making financial decision influence that align with their values. Jane's goal is to teach her clients that money plays a supporting role to their values.

Here is my brief chat with Jane:

MOLLY: We know many of us are at a place of being completely overwhelmed even before a breast cancer diagnosis further disrupts our lives. It is not enough that we are working full time to support our families, juggling kid's commitments, homework, household chores, and keeping the bills paid on time, not to mention the mounds of laundry. There is little time to care for ourselves until that call comes

and taking care of ourselves becomes one more thing we **MUST** do.

We feel like everything has been thrown at us, including the proverbial kitchen sink, where we see ourselves spinning out of control and going down the drain, never to emerge financially. As treatment begins, the medical bills begin to pile up, often remaining unopened as it is just too painful to look at the cost of care to save our lives.

For me, I began to believe I was a financial burden to my family, that they might be better off without me. What a lie! Now, add in the cost of prescription medicines to manage side effects and the foods our physician's recommend to boost our immune system. It is all just too much. The last thing we want to have to think about is how to manage it all, including our money or lack thereof. We are not going to pick up the phone and seek the advice of a trusted financial professional like yourself. Jane, as a CPA, how are you different in your

approach to understanding and managing money, and how do you begin helping Survivors do more than survive but learn to thrive financially?

JANE: I think the biggest reason I'm different is because I don't focus only on what to do with your money. We all know what to do with our money: Save more and spend less. But somehow it just doesn't always work that simply. We often get stuck on the merry-go-round of frustration. I help people understand *why*. It's the *why* that solves the problems by raising our awareness about how we operate in this complex world of ours.

Money problems are amplified because of the diagnosis. Expenses rise because of medical costs, and taking care of yourself through better nutrition and better self-care. Anytime we add expenses to an already tight budget, we feel the impact mentally, emotionally and oftentimes physically.

The diagnosis shoves you into a world where you easily feel out of control—and I don't know many people who like feeling out of control. So we look for things we think we can control. And money is one thing the world constantly tells you that you need to get it together.

And as you know from trying to control anything, this is where life gets interesting. Anything we have ever done wrong, anything we're trying to hide or ignore is right there to get in our way. So, it's another "in your face" time to reassess how you want to live your life—this time with money.

MOLLY: When you say things we have done wrong, or trying to hide or ignore what exactly do you mean? Can you give me an example?

JANE: It starts with being aware of your general attitude about how money shows up in your life. One thing I like to talk about is the concept of "enough". Have you ever thought about how you use that term? Do you always have "just enough?" Just barely able to live paycheck to paycheck? And so even if you get a



huge raise or gift, it's already gone because you believe you will always have "just enough". Or maybe your belief is "barely enough" and you can't even make it to the next paycheck. So, you want to work on that underlying general belief and turn it around to "more than enough" so you can live the abundant life you deserve.

That general attitude about abundance is just the starting point, there are money beliefs that get in the way of most parts of our life

MOLLY: Can you expand on "money beliefs?"

JANE: Most of us aren't aware of them because we've been taught that money is a concrete thing—dollars and cents—you either have it or you don't. But money is much, much more because we humans are the ones that created the concept of money. And we infused the concept of money judgment and beliefs about ourselves and money. Unfortunately, we don't usually stop to think about those.

We pick up money beliefs from our parents and families, schools and work, religion and spirituality, overall society and the media. The media is an easy place to start looking for these beliefs. Next time you read or watch an ad on the internet or TV try to find the hidden belief. On the surface they're all about having more.

They're telling you what's important to you and what to believe!

MOLLY: Are you saying money problems aren't just about how much money we have or don't have?

JANE: Definitely! I've worked with multi-millionaires who are miserable. They are unable to enjoy their money because they are operating under someone else's concepts of what's important in life and spending all the money in the world won't help because they are disconnected from who they really are.

I've also worked with people living only on disability who are able to find peace without money because they have been forced to find real joy in their life—relationships, community and the natural world—none of these cost a penny.

Who we are at our core is the same with or without money. And just like other parts of our life, if we aren't in sync with our best self—we're always going to have problems. The diagnosis of breast cancer amplifies the belief about ourselves that we already held.

MOLLY: For years, my self-worth was tied to having money and when I lost it all, I really struggled. I remember hanging out with all my



Jane Honeck, CPA, PFS, PCC

still very wealthy friends, feeling like a complete loser. What has been interesting to me over the last years is seeing what I thought mattered in life, money and the stuff I could buy with it; now has so little value to me. How do we help women to understand their own self-worth and money?

JANE: We start with two simple concepts: one is easy and the other takes a little work because we are human.

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First, be curious. Be curious about everything money related. Next time you buy something ask yourself why am I buying this item, why this brand, why now? Why am I paying with cash—or a credit card? What was I feeling before I bought it, as I bought it—after I bought it? Being curious helps raise your money awareness. All change begins with awareness.

Second, be optimistic. This is the tough one because we've been trained to feel bad about how we deal with money. Or, at least we think we could do better. But either way—starting from negativity keeps us mired in problems and doubt.

The road to change begins with discovering what you do right with money so you can operate from optimism and possibility. Sometimes it's hard to find what's right but there's always something—even if it's being really, really good at spending! And once you've found one thing you do right, you'll be surprised how many more there are.

Discovering what's right allows you to look optimistically at both ends of the spectrum. If you're doing something right then there's something you're not doing as well, some place you want a little more balance. But that comes later because change is much, much easier when you

start from a place of optimism. With optimism your head is up and you see opportunities coming your way.

These two steps seem small but they are the foundation for making changes that stick. Make them part of your everyday routine. Slow down, pay attention and see how money is really playing out in your life. We have to understand what we want to change. Curiosity and optimism will open your mind to a whole new world with money.

On the 10th Annual Thrive's Cruise April 24-30, 2016 I will host two special workshops that will demonstrate how to begin to have a lasting money breakthrough experience. *Girls on the Go Just Want to Have More Dough* is a fun and interactive workshop. I have a gift for all workshop attendees in celebration of the BCW's 10th Annual Thrive's Cruise.

If you cannot join us on the cruise, you are also invited to join me in the BCW Financial Webinars beginning in June when we launch my series, *The New Money Dynamic Program*, for those seeking financial wellness after diagnosis.

MOLLY: Well Jane, I look forward to meeting you and learning more. And for those of you who will be cruising with us, please be sure to

seek me out and I will candidly share my money story with you, the fears I still struggle with and how a shift from getting to giving changed everything.



MOLLY MACDONALD

Diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2005, she was unable to start her new job as planned. Her family's already tight budget was immediately overburdened with the addition of a monthly COBRA health insurance payments coupled with the loss of her income. As a result, she was determined to help others suffering from lost income as a result of their diagnosis

and treatment. In 2006 she founded The Pink Fund, where she now serves as CEO working daily to provide help and hope to Survivors and their families. "By providing 90 days of non-medical financial assistance, making payments to the patient's creditors for insurance, housing, transportation and utilities, we give help and hope." Since its founding, The Pink Fund has made \$845,504.45 in bill payments on behalf of 843 Survivors. For her work MacDonald has been the recipient of many local and national awards, most notably she has been named a Pink Power Mom, by Kids II and Bright Starts. She is a Purpose Prize Fellow, presented by Encore.org for social impact, and Money Magazine's 2014 Michigan Money Hero. The Pink Fund was recently recognized as a top global cancer innovator in patient centric care by The LiveStrong Foundation for its work in helping to rebuild financial health; and was named by Time and Money, together with Charity Navigator as one of five national breast cancer charities worthy of your donation where you can feel confident your dollars will be put to good use. A graduate from The University of Michigan in journalism, MacDonald's past work experience includes reporting, marketing, public relations and sales. She is a mother to five adult children.

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REAL HELP NOW

NATURAL HELP FOR HEALTHY BONES

BY CHRISTINE HORNER, M.D.

As you age, it is normal for your bones to lose density. When you are young, your bones continue to grow and add mass until you are about thirty years old. Sometime between thirty and forty-five, more bone starts to absorb than is replaced, causing your bone mineral density to decrease. However, too much bone loss, a condition called “osteoporosis,” can cause your bones to become porous and fragile, which increases your risk of fractures. The National Osteoporosis Foundation estimates that 54 million Americans currently have osteoporosis or low bone density. Every year, approximately 1.5 million suffer osteoporosis-related bone fractures. Studies suggest that approximately one in two women and up to one in four men age fifty and older will break a bone due to osteoporosis.

WHAT CAUSES EXCESSIVE BONE LOSS?

There are many factors that have been found to increase your risk of osteoporosis, including:

- ✗ Low body weight
- ✗ Advanced age
- ✗ Amenorrhea

- ✗ Anorexia nervosa
- ✗ Estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone imbalances
- ✗ Autoimmune diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and ankylosing spondylitis
- ✗ Gastrointestinal issues, including celiac disease, weight-loss surgery, and inflammatory bowel disease
- ✗ Certain medications, such as corticosteroids and anticonvulsants
- ✗ Cigarette smoking
- ✗ Endocrine disorders, including diabetes, hyperthyroidisms, hyperparathyroidism, and Cushing’s disease
- ✗ Inactivity
- ✗ Yo-yo dieting
- ✗ Excessive consumption of alcohol
- ✗ Drinking colas
- ✗ Consuming excessive animal protein—particularly red meat

WESTERN APPROACHES

There is a lot of controversy when it comes to the Western approach to bone loss and its prevention and treatments. John Abramson,

M.D., explains in his book, *Overdosed America: The Broken Promise of American Medicine*, how the pharmaceutical companies have done an excellent job creating the illusion that normal bone loss with age is a disease that needs pharmaceutical treatment. However, studies show that in general these drugs do not significantly lower your risk of fractures. The full explanations are beyond the scope of this book, but in short, these medications add strength to the outer layer of your bone (cortical bone), whereas the strength of your bone actually comes from the inner layer (trabecular bone). In fact, studies show that women who take bisphosphonate drugs, such as Fosamax, Actonel, Boniva, and Reclast, for more than five years have almost a three times higher incidence of hip fractures! In addition, these medications are associated with a number of serious side effects, including eye problems, osteonecrosis (destruction) of the jaw, liver and kidney damage, cardiac arrhythmias, and low calcium, to name a few. The good news is there are many natural approaches without dangerous side effects that can help to keep your bones strong.

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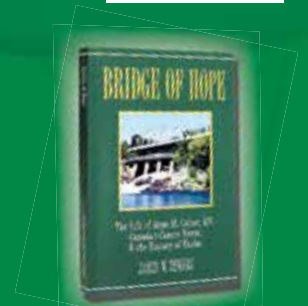
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NATURAL APPROACHES

Good bone health begins with good nutrition. Research shows that eating a wide variety of fresh, organically grown plants—fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds help to supply your bones with the nutrients they need to stay strong. There are also a number of dietary supplements that research shows can help preserve your bone density and lower your risk of osteoporosis. In the past, it was thought that supplemental calcium was all that was needed. However, as our knowledge of bone physiology has advanced, we now understand that magnesium, vitamin D, and vitamin K2 are also critically important. In fact, these four nutrients interact together and support each other. Taking excess amounts of one, while being deficient in another, can have serious consequences, including increasing your risk of heart attacks and strokes.



MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is a mineral that is vital for your overall health. It is involved in more than 300 different enzymes in your body and is essential for the most basic processes of your body—from proteins synthesis, energy production, metabolism, and digestion to the function of your bones, muscles, and nerves. Taking extra calcium without also taking adequate amounts of magnesium can cause muscle spasms and even lead to heart attacks and sudden death. Magnesium not only helps to maintain your bone density, but also lowers the risk of numerous other diseases and conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, migraine headaches, depression, fatigue, and possibly colorectal tumors. The daily recommended amount is 310–320 mg per day for women and 400–420 mg for men. Good food sources include seaweed and green leafy vegetables, such as spinach and Swiss chard, as well as avocados, beans, nuts, and seeds especially pumpkin, sunflower, and sesame seeds. You can't take pure magnesium supplements, because magnesium has to be combined with another substance, such as

glycinate, chloride, carbonate, or citrate. Each substance affects how well the magnesium is absorbed and used by your body. For example, magnesium glycinate is a chelated form that is highly absorbable and bioavailable. Magnesium chloride contains only 12 percent magnesium, but has better absorption than many other forms. Magnesium citrate is also well absorbed and has a laxative effect. Magnesium can be bitter, so I recommend either tablets or a delicious powdered form mixed with water such as Natural Calm made by Natural Vitality.

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D, like magnesium, has profound effects on your entire body. It acts more like a hormone and has been shown to interact with thousands of genes. Vitamin D helps your bone density by increasing the absorption and retention of calcium. A study from Iceland published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2005 found that if you don't get enough vitamin D, it doesn't seem to matter to your bones how much calcium you get. In other words, even high doses of calcium won't do much good in preserving your bone density if you don't get enough vitamin D. When your vitamin D levels are sufficient, the amount of calcium you require to maintain ideal bone health may be far less.

A subject of thousands of recent studies, vitamin D is essential not only for good bone health, but also for your overall health. It has been shown to lower your risk of most chronic diseases, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and certain cancers. Vitamin D is unique because your body can manufacture it when your skin is exposed to sunlight. But the vast majority of Americans are found to be deficient, so taking supplemental amounts is recommended. Vitamin D is found naturally in only a few foods such as fatty fish and mushrooms. There are several foods—for example, milk, orange juice, and cereal—that are fortified with vitamin D. To get enough daily vitamin D from these foods, large volumes of them would have to be consumed, so taking supplemental vitamin D is also important. Experts now believe that healthy individuals need at least 2,000 IU of vitamin D3 (the active form) per day, and if you are sick, you may need much more.

VITAMIN K2

Vitamin K comes in two forms: K1 and K2. Vitamin K1 is found in green vegetables and helps your blood to clot. Vitamin K2 is manu-

factured by bacteria and helps to keep calcium in its appropriate place. Specifically, it helps your bone hang on to calcium by supporting your osteoblasts (cells that build bone) and quieting your osteoclasts (cells that absorb bone). Vitamin K2 also prevents calcium from being deposited on the walls of your arteries, and therefore, lowers your risk of cardiovascular disease. If you take calcium without vitamin K2, it may deposit in the wrong places and increase your risk of heart disease and other problems. Taking mega doses of vitamin D3 without taking vitamin K2 can cause you to become vitamin D toxic. Experts recommend you take 100–150 mcg of vitamin K2 for every 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 you take. Natural sources of vitamin K2 include fermented foods, especially natto. Because the taste of natto can be disagreeable for many, I recommend a vitamin K2 supplement.

Other substances that research shows may help keep your bones fit include omega-3 fatty acids, tea, soy, and flaxseeds.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Many studies have found that omega-3 fatty acids improve bone health, including a study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, which found that docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is important for health bone marrow and bone density.

TEA

A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in 2000 found that older women (ages sixty-five to seventy-six) who drank tea had significantly greater bone density than those who did not drink tea.

SOY

A double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized study published in the journal *Menopause* in 2004 found that soy isoflavones maintained hip bone mineral content in postmenopausal women.

EXERCISE

Last but not least, exercise, especially weight-bearing exercises that put stress on your bones, such as jogging and weight lifting, is extremely important for maintaining bone density. It's also a good idea to include balance and coordination exercises, too, because they can help to prevent falls.

Remember that your bone density naturally decreases with age and doesn't mean you have

a disease. If you are at risk for too much bone loss, the best approach is to prevent it naturally. If possible, avoid pharmaceutical medications because of their significant side effects and questionable benefits. Instead, eat plenty of fresh, organic green vegetables; go for brisk walks every day—in the sunshine if possible; and make sure to take adequate amounts of calcium, magnesium, and vitamins D3 and K2.



Christine Horner, M.D.

Christine Horner, M.D. is a board certified and nationally recognized surgeon, author, expert in natural medicine, professional speaker and a relentless champion for women's health. She is the author of *Waking the Warrior Goddess: Dr. Christine Horner's Program to Protect Against and Fight Breast Cancer*, winner of the Independent Book Publishers Award 2006

for Best Book in Health, Medicine, and Nutrition and the author of the 2016 book *Radiant Health, Ageless Beauty: Dr. Christine Horner's 30-Day Program to Extraordinary Health, Beauty, and Longevity*. www.drchristinehorner.com.

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SPA IN A PITCHER



If you've ever had a Pimm's cocktail (or Pimm's Cup, as it's known among the British faithful), you know it often contains a variety of herbs and sliced fruits. I was watching a friend make his version of a Pimm's cocktail with orange, lemon, cucumber peel, and a secret herb blend when I thought, "Wow, that looks so refreshing; it's like going to a spa!" This tonic is like art floating in a chilled pitcher, with thin rounds of orange, lemon, and cucumber interspersed with sprigs of thyme and mint.

- X 1 orange, thinly sliced into rounds
- X 1 Meyer lemon, thinly sliced into rounds
- X 1 unpeeled English cucumber, thinly sliced into rounds
- X 3 sprigs fresh thyme, tarragon, or mint or fennel fronds, or a combination
- X 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed Meyer lemon juice
- X 8 cups water or sparkling water

Put the orange, lemon, cucumber, herbs, and lemon juice in a large pitcher. Press the fruit, cucumber, and herbs against the bottom of the pitcher with a wooden spoon, pushing down and twisting slightly to release their juices and volatile oils. Add the water and stir to combine. **MAKES 8 CUPS**

Refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

VARIATION: In place of the water, use a weak tea made with 8 cups of boiling water and 4 chamomile, ginger, or green tea bags. Let the tea cool to room temperature before adding it to the pitcher.

PREP TIME: 5 minutes **COOK TIME:** 1 hour for chilling

STORAGE: Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

PER SERVING: (1 cup per serving) Calories: 0; Total Fat: 0 g (0 g saturated, 0 g monounsaturated); Carbohydrates: 0 g; Protein: 0.5 g; Fiber: 1 g; Sodium: 1.5 mg

YOGURT-BERRY BRULÉE

WITH MAPLE ALMOND BRITTLE

You may think that making crème brûlée requires blowtorches, welder's glasses, and asbestos gloves. But I've come up with an alternative method that doesn't involve having to whip out the torch. Instead, a sweet, crunchy brittle is made in the oven, with only one requirement: keeping a very close eye on it as it cooks. The brittle is perched atop a delectable bowl of berry-studded sweetened Greek yogurt, which is just as creamy as the egg-, dairy-, and sugar-laden custard typical in crème brûlée, and it also brings a host of health benefits to the table.

BRITTLE

- X 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- X 3 tablespoons Grade B maple syrup
- X 2 tablespoons sliced almonds
- X 1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom

MAPLE-SCENTED YOGURT

- X 2 cups organic plain Greek yogurt
- X 1 1/4 cups fresh berries, any type
- X 1 teaspoon Grade B maple syrup

To make the brittle, preheat the oven to 375°F and turn the oven light on. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread the oil on the parchment paper with a paper towel or brush, covering the parchment with a thin, even film of oil.

Combine the maple syrup, almonds, and cardamom in a small bowl. Pour the mixture onto the oiled parchment paper, then tilt the pan to spread it evenly. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes, staying close to the oven. The syrup will first become bubbly, then, after another 2 or 3 minutes, the almonds will take on a nice golden color and the syrup will have a deep amber color. At this point, remove the brittle from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

To make it easier to break into pieces, you can pop it into the freezer for about 5 minutes. Using a thin metal spatula, lift the hardened brittle and break it into randomly sized pieces. Use immediately or store in an airtight container.

To make the yogurt mixture and assemble the dish, put the yogurt, 1 cup of the berries, and the maple syrup in a bowl and stir gently to combine.

Just before serving, spoon the yogurt mixture onto dessert dishes, top with the brittle, and scatter the remaining 1/2 cup berries around the edges.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

VARIATION: Elevate this recipe by incorporating Roasted Strawberries (page 214) and their juices as a layer.

PREP TIME: 10 minutes **COOK:** 12 minutes

STORAGE: Store the brittle in an airtight container in the refrigerator

for 5 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month.

PER SERVING: Calories: 240; Total Fat: 14 g (9 g saturated, 2 g monounsaturated); Carbohydrates: 21 g; Protein: 8.5 g; Fiber: 2 g; Sodium: 35 mg





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MEDITERRANEAN LENTIL SALAD



I really should have called this Lentil Inside-Out Salad. Here's why: With most salads, you pour the dressing on at the end and coat the dish from the outside in. But in this salad, the lentils cool off in the fridge in a bath of dressing—in this case olive oil, vinegar, lemon, and cumin. They absorb all of this wonderful flavor, which is heightened by the addition of red bell pepper, kalamata olives, parsley, and mint. This Mediterranean delight is like a vacation to the island of Crete without leaving your home. Le Puy lentils are resilient little things that hold their shape well throughout the cooking process, making them perfect for a salad.

- X 1 cup dried lentils, preferably Le Puy green lentils, rinsed well
- X 1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed
- X 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- X 2 bay leaves
- X 1 cinnamon stick, or 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- X 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- X 1 tablespoon brown rice vinegar
- X 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- X 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- X 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- X 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- X 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced small
- X 1 small cucumber, seeded and diced small
- X 1/4 cup pitted kalamata olives, rinsed and sliced
- X 3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- X 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- X 2 ounces organic feta cheese, crumbled (optional)

Combine the lentils, garlic, oregano, bay leaf, and cinnamon stick in a saucepan and cover with water or broth by 2 inches. Bring to a boil, then cover, lower the heat, and simmer until the lentils are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Drain the lentils thoroughly and discard the whole spices.

In a separate bowl, whisk the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, lemon zest, cumin, and salt together. Toss the lentils with the vinaigrette, then refrigerate for 20 minutes.

Stir in the bell pepper, cucumber, olives, mint, and parsley and combine, then do a FASS check—and season as needed with another pinch of salt, a few grinds of pepper, or lemon juice. Serve with the feta cheese sprinkled over the top. **SERVES 6**

PREP TIME: 10 minutes • **COOK TIME:** 25 minutes

STORAGE: Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days.

PER SERVING: Calories: 210; Total Fat: 11.6 g (1.5 g saturated, 7.8 g monounsaturated); Carbohydrates: 21 g; Protein: 7 g; Fiber: 5 g; Sodium: 195 mg

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Beautifully Your Life

Spring is here,

and that means it's time for rebirth and renewal; time to refresh and revive. This time of year always feels very deep to me, soulful somehow. Maybe it's because you can literally see that once dormant, snow-clad environment becomes anew, blooming with possibilities.

Our thoughts are like seeds that we plant in the soil of our soul. When we consciously choose to think positive thoughts and lovingly plant them, we are rewarded with blooms that are so bright with color and sweetly fragrant, they not only touch our hearts but stimulate our senses, leading us to more joy, more appreciation, and more love.

Sometimes, we have to act like farmers, choosing seeds that will not only inspire us but can also endure rough weather so they can sustain us in the future. Ones that will feed and nurture us through the cold and dark times where growth and transition can seem impossible.

At times, we may need to weed the occasional dandelion or crabgrass, along with a gentle pruning to keep our gardens thriving. This is natural to the process of a growing environment, so don't be discouraged.

In any phase of life, we need to nourish our creation with sunlight, water, and nutrient-filled soil in order to see our blooms of beauty, possibly even seeing this beauty in a new light.

Beautifully your gardens, ladies, and may they be filled with hope, light and new beginnings.

—Jan Ping





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WAKING THE WARRIOR GODDESS

Dr. Christine Horner's Program to Protect Against & Fight Breast Cancer

Breast cancer has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Once a relatively rare disease, it now affects 2 to 3 million American women. What can we do to protect ourselves? Christine Horner, M.D., has the prescription: Eat healthy foods, add a good dose of certain supplements, get the rest and exercise we need, and avoid things that are bad for our bodies. We each have a Warrior Goddess in us, and it's time to set her free.

A pioneer who pushed through federal and state legislation ensuring that breast reconstruction after a mastectomy would be paid for by insurance companies, Dr. Horner lost her own mother to breast cancer. She decided then that her mother's death would not be in vain.

Using the metaphor of the Warrior Goddess, this book explains what Ayurveda, an ancient system of healing, describes as our "inner healing intelligence." It also explores the various foods and supplements that enable women to prevent and successfully fight breast cancer, as they claim the healthy body that should be theirs. Dr. Horner has added research from more than 500 studies to the updated third edition of her award-winning book, as well as information on risk and the BRCA1 gene mutation (the genetic condition Angelina Jolie was found to have), and a new chapter on "The Spiritual Journey of Breast Cancer." In it, she describes why cancer is a wakeup call, a time-out in which women can turn inward to evaluate their lives with the intent to restore good health and learn how to receive, trust, and surrender as they cultivate their relationship with their intuition and a higher power.

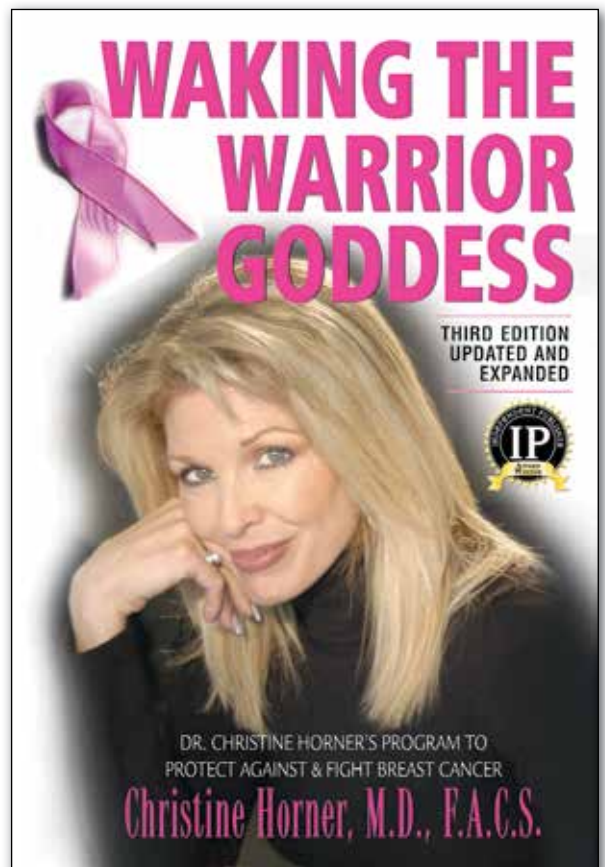
The final part of *Waking the Warrior Goddess* presents Dr. Horner's Thirty-Step Program for reclaiming health and defeating breast cancer. In addition, this book includes an extensive, newly updated resources section for obtaining the particular nutrients and products that our bodies need to become and stay strong and healthy.

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LEARN TO LOVE YOU

The answer for handling intimacy after breast cancer



[cover story]

Learn to Love



YOU

The answer for handling
intimacy after breast cancer

By Christina Relf

Did your sexuality suffer when surgery changed your body? Intimacy is possibly the last taboo when it comes to talking about the effects of breast cancer. Here, we take a peek under the covers, and share some personal stories from different viewpoints.

What happens when cancer strikes and surgery leaves us with scars—both mental and physical? For some women, the loss of one or both breasts changes the way they see themselves—they feel less sexy, less feminine, and this inevitably impacts their intimate relationships.

It's all too easy to compare yourself with other women and feel inadequate. But—brace yourself—the expert advice here is not to run away from your altered reflection, but learn to love it. According to Barbara Musser, breast cancer survivor, author, coach and founder of sexyaftercancer.com, reconnecting with yourself is your key focus, before reaching out to your partner. Barbara has made it her life's work to help women and couples reboot their sex lives after cancer. And she's adamant that the first step is to look in the mirror.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Many of us find it uncomfortable even to be left sitting in front of the hairdresser's mirror for too long, but Barbara's 'mirror practice' course invites us to see our reflection in order to change the way we see ourselves.

"This is a way of engaging with yourself as if you were looking at someone you love. It works because it can actually create new neural pathways in our brains, so we start to think differently," she says. The process is split into three stages—the first involves simply looking into your own face in the mirror for 5 minutes a day and saying "I love you. You're beautiful." Doing this each day for 30 days is ideal. Then you move on to looking at your whole body, dressed in clothes that make you feel gorgeous, and repeat the process. This sets the tone for the final, and most difficult, part—standing naked at the mirror, looking at your breast area and your whole body, and affirming your love and acceptance.

Barbara recognizes that our negative inner voices may not instantly respond to all this positivity, but insists that repetition is key: “You know the saying, ‘seeing is believing?’ It should really be ‘believing is seeing,’ because when we change our inner thoughts to positive ones, that’s what we start to see in the mirror. When your inner voice criticizes you, consciously change your thoughts and say, ‘I love myself’ or ‘I am gorgeous.’ Over time, your beliefs about yourself will begin to shift.”

SEXUAL HEALING

Accepting ourselves is one thing—but how do men cope when their partner experiences a life-threatening diagnosis, disfiguring surgery and the side-effects of hormonal therapy? *Amoena Life* reader Jackie feels grateful that her husband helped her shower immediately upon returning home from hospital. It meant he had no choice but to see her scar, and she had no choice but to show him. “It must have been very difficult for him, but what he said helped me so much.” Jackie’s husband reassured her that a reconstruction was not important, but that if she wanted it, then that would be OK too. “Relief flooded through me, and to this day I am eternally grateful for those words,” she says.



Jackie acknowledges that over the next weeks and months she struggled with her body image. “I felt half little girl and half woman—definitely less feminine and definitely not sexy!” Making more effort with pretty lingerie helped, and Jackie is grateful that there’s so much more to love about mastectomy lingerie these days. She still prefers to stay partially covered when making love, but has come to terms with the way things are. “I think it’s important to enjoy what we do have,” she says.

Moira found that being diagnosed in her late 50s meant she was already secure enough in her sexuality not to be threatened by the loss of a breast: “I may have had a very different reaction had I been younger.”

Although at first she was hesitant about revealing her scar to her husband, her fears evaporated when she did so. “He said, ‘You don’t need two boobs to be gorgeous!’ That was all it took; I relaxed and I have never looked back.” She also found an unexpected bonus

about her mastectomy: “What I actually love about my flat side is how I can snuggle right up close to my husband and I can feel his heart through my chest.”

Both Jackie and Moira emphasize that intimacy comes in many forms and it’s crucial to keep the lines of communication open. “Men are used to being able to fix stuff, and this just isn’t an easy fix,” says Moira. “Women are afraid they will be rejected, so they don’t talk about their fears, and the silence just grows. For us, talking about everything and keeping a sense of humour has got us through some scary times.”

Jackie says it’s also vital to stay close: “Cuddle, kiss, hold hands, spend time with each other. There are so many ways to be intimate.”

Barbara Musser couldn’t agree more. “Most men are just so relieved that their partner is safe. They don’t care about her scars as long as they can hold her, kiss her and love her. But a woman has to be ready to accept that love, in whatever form it comes.

“Breast cancer can bring a couple together or blow them apart. It amplifies what is already going on in the relationship. This is why the need for communication becomes so much stronger. It is really important for the couple to be able to share what they are

“Most men are just so relieved that their partner is safe. They don’t care about her scars as long as they can hold her, kiss her and love her. But a woman has to be ready to accept that love, in whatever form it comes.”

experiencing, and not be unhinged by whatever they hear.

“And remember, it’s not realistic to believe you’ll be able to resume your previous sexual activity during and after treatment—particularly if a woman is having hormonal therapy. This is where you need to talk about what you can do to keep the intimacy alive. Trust me, it is possible. You may even end up with a more intimate relationship than you ever had before diagnosis.”

Barbara offers practical tips on her website and in her book, *Sexy After Cancer*. One that’s especially effective: “When you get home each day, have a 30-second kiss. It’s so much more intimate than a peck on the cheek and really puts you in touch with each other.” ■

RESOURCES

Barbara Musser

www.sexyaftercancer.com | [@sexyaftercancer](https://twitter.com/sexyaftercancer)

Amoena Life received these two thought-provoking personal reflections about intimacy, one from the married perspective, and the other from a single woman. To honor their privacy, we've omitted the authors' names.

For Worse and For Better *Getting back on course in my marriage*

When my husband, Chuck, and I met in 1988, I was all boobs and big hair. The chemistry between us was off the charts. On our very first date I couldn't pull my neon floral Betsy Johnson mini-dress off fast enough. We quickly got engaged and married. And so began our big beautiful life with houses, babies, careers, vacations, and amazing sex.

All that came to a screeching halt when I was diagnosed with stage III breast cancer. We were in our forties and in the prime of our lives. Nothing could have prepared us for the extreme levels of anxiety and confusion we endured: breast cancer changed us as a couple.

We walked the journey through treatment with grace and gratitude. I continued to wear sky-high heels and a Cheshire cat smile, despite my embarrassment of my flattened, scarred chest. I locked the door when I showered. Chuck followed my lead and respectfully averted his gaze when I had to undress for what felt like daily examinations by doctors. But he took care of me, he rubbed my back and brought me soup and held my hand. When all was quiet at night I would cry quietly next to him and wonder where that sexy couple had gone.

Weeks of no sex turned into months, which eventually turned into a year. This, for a couple that could ignite a fire with a simple kiss. The subject of sex had become awkward with a capital A. So I finally confronted it head-on. In a pivotal, emotional moment one morning, I woke Chuck from a deep sleep, took off my pink t-shirt, and sobbed. From there, a warm and eventually sensual conversation began, as did our journey to becoming a newer, wiser, sexier pair.

Some days I think I should have let him in sooner. I should have made him look at my scars. I should not have allowed him to be the one to shave my head. I should have touched him in the darkness. I should not have been so caught up in fighting cancer. But that very cancer has taught me to never look back.

It's been four years and my hair is long. My chest? Still under construction. But my relationship is better than ever. We are intimate in every way. With fabulous date nights and infinite amounts of love and laughter we are a super-sexy survivor couple.

That Betsy Johnson dress still hangs in my closet as a reminder to never let a little thing like cancer stop you from a fantastic roll in the hay. And, it still fits!

Owning It, On My Own *Empowered as a single woman*

Our story had all the makings of a Hollywood movie, meeting as strangers at the airport, bound on the same trip that began a wonderful year and an endless series of adventures together, so much so we often joked about selling the film rights.

The relationship went from strength to strength, until that is, the test results came back and I suddenly felt diseased and unattractive. Something ugly was growing inside me and I didn't want him to touch me or look at my body.

After the operation, I openly showed him my body, swollen, battered and bruised—the lump was gone and so I felt there was nothing left for me to hide. It was then I needed his touch more than ever, to make me feel feminine and desirable again, but as the scars began to heal the rest of me started to fall apart. One by one, the bad days outweighed the good—but more than that, I didn't like the person I was becoming. There was nothing familiar, fun or even attractive about her and she was starting to have an effect on our relationship.

I was certain that no matter what he would stick by me, but it seemed increasingly unfair of me to let this man, whom I loved deeply, be tied to a woman with barely a hint of the girl he fell in love with remaining. So I let him go—free to find someone else, someone who could make him happy.

The road since for both of us has been a rocky one but we've been there for each other, not as partners but as the

dearest of friends.

I'm happy to say that I'm now back to being "me," just with more purpose and drive than ever before. I like to think that our film has become a sequel and the "happily ever after" is still within reach for both of us. Whether that's ultimately together or separately, one thing is for sure, the body I have and the scars that it bears are only a reminder of a battle that I fought and won. They will not define me. They are not the sum of me. They are simply a part of me and the story of my life. ■



Insider Secrets: What every woman needs to know

Thin molded
foam inserts –
the smoothing
secret
ingredient!

Pssst! Lean in a little closer... Would you like to know what really makes great lingerie? When you step into the fitting room do you ever wonder why one bra fits and another one doesn't? With 40 years' experience, Amoena and our expert fitters are uniquely qualified to answer questions like those, share our insider secrets, and maybe dispel a few myths you might have encountered.

It's no mystery that you deserve, and can have, a perfectly beautiful bra that's just right for you.

Modeled by survivors Annette, 50; Karin, 55; Angela, 57. **Our secret is out!** To see the full Spring 2016 collection, go to www.amoena.us/amoenalife.

PICTURE PERFECT: Bestselling Lara in smooth satin helps hide any imperfections. **Lara Satin wire-free bra** in Terracotta, sizes 32 to 42, AA to D, and matching panty, sizes 6 to 16.



FLIRTY FEMININITY:
Scalloped lace trim and a springtime play on “neutral.” **Angelique padded wire-free bra** in Apricot, sizes 32 to 36 A; 32 to 40, B to D.

“My lumpectomy left me so uneven, I didn’t think I’d wear fitted shirts again, but a padded bra and a partial shaper does the trick.”
–Karin



ANIMAL OPTION:
T-shirt bras don’t have to be plain! **Jane padded wire-free bra** in Hazel, sizes 32 to 42, AA to D, and matching panty, sizes 6 to 16.



SMOOTH AS SILK: T-shirts love this bra and a partial shaper can lift your décolleté. **Lilly padded wire-free bra** in Off-White, sizes 32 to 42, AA to D and matching panty, sizes 6 to 18.

ABOVE AND BELOW: We love extra padding on the shoulders; straps should never dig in. Below the bust, a wider underband adds stability. **Isadora wire-free bra** in Raspberry, sizes 34 to 50 A; 32 to 48, B to D; 32 to 44, DD to G; and matching panty, sizes 6 to 24.

“The bras I used to buy were never 100% comfortable. I thought my breast surgery would make that even worse... but then I discovered Amoena bras.”
—Annette

ALL IN THE DETAILS:

Softer trims and elastics make the difference in comfort. **Katy wire-free bra** in Cognac, sizes 32 to 44, AA to DDD.

NO POKING: We're experts at soft bras, but even our underwire bras are gentle. **Tracy wire-free bra** in Apricot/Off-White, sizes 32 to 40, A to D, and matching panty, sizes 6 to 16.

In 2016, look for more comfort improvements to every bra style!

EXTREMELY ELEGANT:

Amoena Seduction bras have lower necklines and fabulous embellishments, to ensure “sexy” is an everyday possibility.

Adriana wire-free bra in Off-White/Bisque, sizes 32 to 36 A; 32 to 40, B to D; and 32 to 38 DD; and matching panty, sizes 6 to 16.



New Nude!
Introducing a rich, modern shade of neutral.



“When I imagined mastectomy bras, “lace” and “sexy” were definitely words I thought I’d left behind. Happily, that is not the case!”
–Angela

HINT: LACE OVERLAY: When we lay lace over nude, it hints at romance while still supporting you. Popular **Annette**, now in a wire-free bra in Black/Nude. Sizes 32 to 40, A to D.



STRETCH AND BEND: The secret to great lace is to make it elastic, so it hugs close to your skin for breast form support and a better fit. **Karla wire-free bra** in Nude, sizes 32 to 42, A to D, and matching panty, sizes 6 to 16.



Feeling Feminine

Learning to trust her new body is Elian's key to embracing every good day

"Femininity is not only in your breasts, but also in your heart, soul, and what you radiate," says Elian Daris, 48, who lives in The Netherlands. And Elian should know, having been through the wringer and come out as strong as she is beautiful. "I feel more feminine now than ever before."

A friend of the family died of cancer and that, combined with being a DES baby (she was exposed *in utero* to a synthetic estrogen called *diethylstilbestrol*, used from 1938 to the early '70s and later found to be a breast cancer risk factor), led Elian to go in for a mammogram. Just as a precaution, she insists; she had no reason to believe there was anything wrong.

It turned out, though, that Elian was smart to see her doctor. She had two malignant tumors in her right breast and a number of micro-calcifications in her left breast. "My world turned upside down," she recalls.

After being thoroughly checked and thinking through all her options, Elian had a mastectomy on her right side and a lumpectomy on her left. In addition, the doctors also removed all of the lymph nodes under her right arm; fortunately, she has only a moderate form of lymphedema.

Elian's initial response to the diagnosis was incredulity. "You can't believe it's happening to you," she says. But she never asked, 'why me?' If anything, Elian accepted the situation with equilibrium. "It happens to so many women, why not me!"

After the surgeries, Elian had five rounds of chemotherapy, followed by hormone treatment. She's still receiving the hormones nine years later, with no ill effects. Two years after the lumpectomy, Elian had the remaining half of her left breast removed so that she could feel symmetrical again. During this period, Elian's mother died. "It was a very emotional time."

Elian chose not to reconstruct her breasts. "I don't want things in my body that don't belong there, but I'm glad that women have the

choice," she says. In addition, she has found that the Amoena breast forms "work perfectly for me," she explains.

That's not to suggest that the diagnosis and treatment was smooth sailing for Elian. She started out afraid, worried about the diagnosis, concerned about what it might mean for her future. But then she realized that she didn't have time to sit back and worry. "You have to fight the ultimate battle," she says. So she reached deep within herself and found the power to fight, quite literally, for her life.

"The chemo left its marks and I was very tired for several years," she says. She had to feel comfortable in her body, with all its new fatigue and little pains. "You have to learn to trust your new body," she says. It takes a lot of time to adjust to all the emotional and physical changes, Elian adds, but, at the same she avers that time is the only way she has processed everything that has happened to her. "Emotionally I feel very strong and physically, I accept my limitations."

While Elian's femininity emerged intact from her breast cancer experience, her marriage did not.

"I have dated a few times," says Elian, but she finds it difficult to share her story. She's still figuring out how and when to tell a partner about her medical history. But she knows she will sort it all out. "There is someone out there who wants to grow old with me and accept me for the person I am," she says.

These days, Elian is feeling healthy and running her own business selling waterproof carryalls designed to withstand heavy Dutch rains. Working with Amoena has also been wonderful. "It brings me so much joy and self-confidence," she says. "I feel privileged to (possibly) be an example for women." She enjoys living as a role model—proving that there's life after cancer—and that you can feel feminine without breasts. "I wake up every morning with a smile on my face, count my blessings, and think 'this is a good day.'" ■

YOUR HEALTH IS A CORE ISSUE

Strengthen the whole body, starting at the center

What we call our “core” is a complex series of muscles, extending far beyond the abdominals and including just about every body part other than our arms and legs.

What Is Your Core and What Does it Do?

When you think of your core, imagine it like a box. The bottom of the “box” is your pelvic floor. The top is your diaphragm. In the front you have the transverse abs, and the internal and external oblique muscles, working in conjunction with the rectus abdominis. In the back it’s the erector spinae muscles coupled with the multifidus.

Every one of these muscle groups needs to be properly exercised to effectively strengthen your core, and doing so will stabilize your spine so that it can easily support the body and move fluidly in any direction.

How to Improve Your Core Strength

Effective core exercises require a combination of multiple muscles engaging together to maintain appropriate support and keep you safe from injuries. You might be surprised at just which injuries: Core strength and balance can help you avoid back injury, of course, but even twisted ankles and sore wrists (particularly in yoga).

According to National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) Certified Personal Trainer Erin Cox, “Your core is where most of your strength and balance originates, which affects how efficiently you move and balance through daily life. Everything you use to move connects to your core.... so strengthening the core will also assist in strengthening the rest of your body.”

In her work as an instructor at York’s Core & Fitness in Ventura, CA, Erin coaches individuals of varying abilities and ages, making sure they reach their fitness goals in a healthy way. “There is no need to do a million crunches to strengthen your core. In fact, a lot of people think core training is simply that, lots and lots of sit-ups,” says Cox.

“This is not the case. Planks, side-planks, many yoga poses, and any sort of strength training that introduces instability will engage the core,” she explains, “because it forces the body to balance, and that is what our core is meant to do. An example is lifting light dumbbells while standing on one foot. Doing sit-ups or planks using an exercise ball adds much more to the exercise because of the unstable surface.”

It’s Never Too Late to Improve YOUR Core Support

Pilates and GYROTONIC® instructor Melinda (Mindy) Horwitz feels posture is a great starting place. “As we age, maintaining our sense of balance often becomes a challenge. The most effective way of maintaining our balance is by activating our core muscles. Strong core muscles not only help our posture but also fight gravity, so no schlumping!”

At her Simpatico Pilates studio in Montecito, CA, Mindy says, “We address core strength, especially during rehabilitation, by teaching our clients how to breathe both diaphragmatically and through the back—expanding the ribcage sideways while keeping the belly flat. This automatically engages the core muscles. After they get the hang of breathing we can then move to other simple core exercises, our goal being to bring them back to vibrant health.” ■

Looking for great workout wear options? Our **Spring 2016 Active wear** is perfectly balanced. Click www.amoena.us/amoenalife to see it!

Powerful Core Punch-List

We use our core muscles in nearly every type of sport and fitness activity, as well as for posture, so it’s important that they’re strong. Some great training methods:

- Martial arts (karate, jiu jitsu, tae kwon do)
- Barre workouts
- Kettlebell and medicine ball workouts
- Yoga/Pilates/Gyrotonics
- Tai Chi/Qi Gong
- Stability ball training

[fashion]



ALOHA, GORGEOUS
Hawaii Wire-free
Tankini Top
6 to 16

Hawaii Panty
6 to 16



**PATTERN
FUSION**
Los Angeles
One-Piece
8 to 16

treasure
YOURSELF



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SUN AND STRIPES
Faro One-Piece
8 to 20

Rituals of Remembrance for Survivorship

by Teresa Schreiber Werth

Acknowledge *Your* Milestones with a Meaningful Ritual

If you don't have a ritual of your own, but think it might be nice to start one, begin by deciding what event you want to honor. Choose the mementos or activities most meaningful *to you*. Think about whether you want to celebrate alone, with another person or a group of people, and plan where and when the ritual will take place. You could try:

- Re-reading greeting cards or a journal
- Creative writing or journaling
- on the day
- An annual exercise routine, remembrance walk or spa day
- A special meal or party with family and/or friends
- Listening to inspirational music

Teresa Schreiber Werth is a retired communications professional and six-year survivor of stage 3 triple negative breast cancer. Her 2011 book, Pink-On-Pink, Writing my Way Through Breast Cancer, is available at www.amazon.com.

Each year on May 8, I meet two friends for a brisk morning walk and a picnic breakfast in the park. We call it our "victory lap." It's our ritual on the anniversary of the day I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. My life was saved by that diagnosis and so we gather each spring to remember and celebrate my survival. I look forward to this walk and time with these friends who were with me every step of my journey. Even though it reminds me of the challenging months and years that followed, it always gives me an emotional and spiritual boost to celebrate the progress I have made.

Breast cancer survivors create many different kinds of rituals to observe the ending of life-as-they-knew-it before cancer and the beginning of survivorship. They can be connected to any aspect of a survivor's journey: the date of diagnosis, the completion of treatment, the three- or five-year anniversary. They can be private remembrances or they can be shared with others. Whatever form they take, people perform them in order to witness, acknowledge and support a significant milestone related to cancer or any other life experience.

Journal-ist of the heart

Nancy wrote in her journal from the day of her diagnosis through radiation, chemotherapy, surgery and every day until her doctor proclaimed her "cancer free." She remembers how euphoric she felt that day. As she skimmed through the pages recently, recalling the highs and lows, she decided to read her journal annually. "It will remind me each year of just how lucky I was to be diagnosed when I was...and feel increasingly grateful for every day and all the experiences I am blessed to enjoy," she says.

A sweet splurge

When Mary Margaret arrived home from work one day, she saw her family gathered around the kitchen table where a beautiful chocolate cake with a big pink ribbon was waiting. It took her a moment to realize this was the five-year anniversary of her diagnosis, a day that changed her life forever. Her family chose this special way to remember and celebrate her life.

Inspired by words of comfort

A large collection of poetry written by breast cancer survivors accumulated in Alysa's living room. She eventually realized that she was drawn to the wisdom of other survivors as she was undergoing treatment. The ritual of reading poetry by survivors not only comforted her, it inspired her to begin composing her own poems and sharing them. Her writing became a sacred space of purposeful intention, and made her feel less alone.

Personal symbols and charms

I have a little altar next to my dresser. I never intended to create it; it evolved as my survivorship unfolded. Each object I have placed there has special significance: a little brass bear bell, reminding me that something as small as a prayer can ward off something as big and scary as a bear; a small rock painted with the image of a fox, my power animal and a good omen; my bravery bracelet, a gift from my young grandson, worn to every treatment; a quartz crystal given to me by a friend, and said to offer healing power, energy and protection; I notice and acknowledge these items daily. Their power is real and comforting. You can't un-ring the bell, but sometimes re-ringing the bell fills it with new meaning! ■



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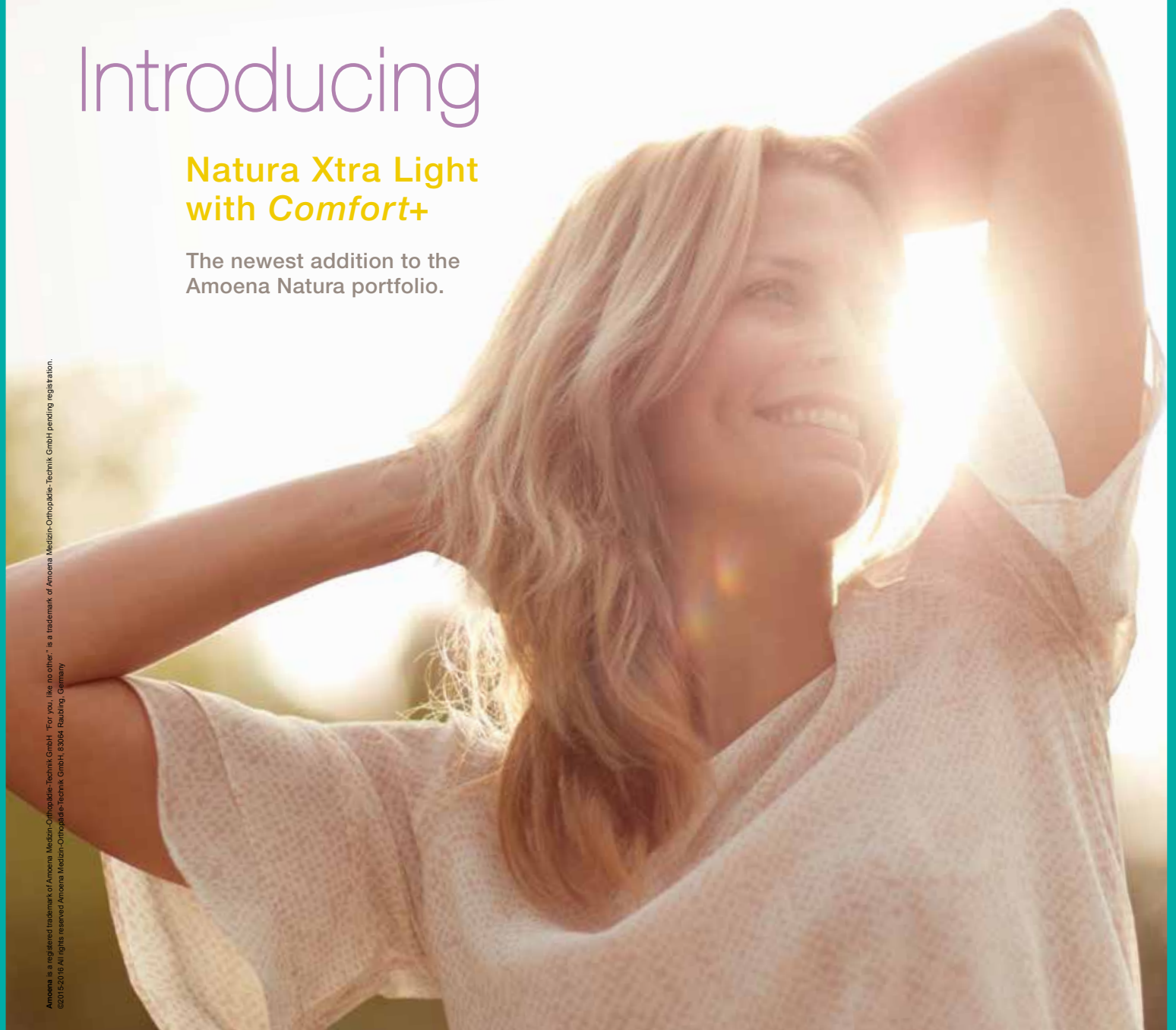
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"It's that inner spirit, that inner cleavage, that was daring me to keep living — the beauty, confidence and courage that exists when everything else is stripped away."

LEARNING TO GRIT UP

NOT

GIVE UP



BY KIM BECKING

It's been over fourteen years since I first heard those words "You have breast cancer." I was only 30, healthy and had no family history. Life was going according to plan but all of that changed with those four simple words. One week I'm planning my son Brandon's two-year old birthday party and the next week I'm starting my first round of chemotherapy. Fourteen years later, I am not only surviving, but thriving.

My own story of thriving is one that I can tell through many chapters, some expected, but others very much unexpected: My battle with breast cancer at the age of 30, the unexpected challenges of marriage, family and divorce, having a second chance at love, remarrying a widower with two small children, and adjusting to a fabulous new life in a blended household as Kim Becking — mom of three, party of five. No matter the challenge, I have continued to reinvent myself, always looking forward, living fully, loving life and making every day count.

The biggest lesson I learned through breast cancer and divorce was learning to LOVE MYSELF NO MATTER WHAT. It's one of the most vital lessons to learn in life. And that starts with loving our imperfectly perfect selves just the way we are — with our fears, insecurities and even scars. I know for me, it took time. I had to stop being so hard on myself and accepting me for who I was and loving all of me.

After my cancer I eventually became comfortable with my scars and with me, the me that no one could see. My husband at the time was very supportive and loved me, scars and all and I was confident and comfortable with the new me. I

mourned losing my breast early on. I have realized that we are so much more than our breasts, our scars and our outward appearance. It's what fellow survivor Geralyn Lucas called our "inner cleavage" and we all have it. It's that inner spirit, that inner cleavage, that dares me to keep living by embracing the beauty and confidence that exits when everything else is stripped away.

Finding my inner cleavage allowed me to not only survive but thrive after my cancer. And I thought that I had reached my quota of life challenges after my cancer but more unexpected change was heading my way: A divorce, unspeakable betrayal by my husband and a good friend and neighbor and a broken heart. When my high school sweetheart and husband left me for a good friend and neighbor, my life, my hopes, my dreams crumbled.

I wasn't sure I could find my inner cleavage again. Going from a We to a Me wasn't supposed to be my future — this isn't how it was supposed to be. For 22 years I had a partner, a lover, a best friend, a husband. He was my everything. All of that was shattered when he left me for my very dear friend and neighbor. He just simply walked out. I didn't know how to be ME, much less LOVE all of me. I had always been a WE. I loved being a team. I loved the WE.

With heaping amounts of grace, grit and gratitude, I found the real me and learned to love me unconditionally, no questions asked. On the hard days, I had to remember to continue to embrace the good while falling apart and then picking myself up off the floor, to rise above the drama and pain and to focus on loving myself and others, to show my compassion, to forgive but not forget, to not be so quick to judge, to feel in order to heal, to realize that being vulnerable is showing strength, not weakness and to show grace, even when it was hard.

I had to find the courage and the resolve to keep going no matter what, to slay my inner bully and other bullies in the world, to look in the mirror and tell myself that I was more than enough, to ignore the dream killers and fun suckers. There were days when I was overwhelmed, where I felt broken, and wondered what if. There were days I stayed in bed hiding under the covers. I had feelings of shock, disbelief, grief, anger, betrayal, fear, confusion and sadness. And I learned to deal with a new sense of normal more than once. But in the end, what I learned is that no one, not even my wasband, or nothing, not even my cancer, can dampen my spirit or take away my zest for life. Because I loved who I was. I loved life. And learning to grit up, not give up is what allowed me to move forward and to be grateful to be alive. I was grateful for not just the big things, but the little everyday things. And in finding gratitude, I found peace and joy.

But getting there took time. And in the process I found ME. ALONE for the first time in my life — just ME. I was no longer part of a WE. I was just Kim. Who was this Kim person? I wanted and needed to get to know

her and LOVE her. So, I learned to fall in love with myself and find that inner cleavage yet again.

*I learned to LOVE ME.
For me. Imperfections and all.
I became confident in my new
self — comfortable with who I
was, not the I that was a part
of a couple, but ME.*

It was falling in love with myself, scars and imperfections and cottage cheese and all, that then allowed me to truly find love again. And it was at that moment, knowing that I loved me, ALL OF ME, that also allowed me to open my heart for my next chapter.

Yes, there were some really dark days. There were “what if’s,” tears, anger, and rage. There were days I couldn’t manage one more thing. There were days where the betrayal was too much to bear. There were days where I wasn’t sure my broken heart could be healed or whether I could ever trust again. I learned that betrayal does more than break your heart, it can harden your soul if you let it. It’s up to you on whether you let it fill your heart with hate, play the victim and make you stuck. Or whether you learn to move on. You get to choose your path. I had to learn to grieve, forgive, let go and move on to my next new chapter that was waiting on me.

There were times where I wanted to let the anger and resentment win. Where I didn’t want to take the high road. Where I wanted to punch my ex and ex-friend in the face and go all crazy ex-wife on them.

But by being bitter and angry, I was still letting them control my life. I had to be strong for my son. I had to set that example for him and be true to who I was. So I got angry, I grieved, I cried more than I ever thought possible. I learned to feel all that I needed to feel so that I could heal. And then I chose to rise above, move on, let go and be better not bitter. I

learned that this unspeakable betrayal led me to love myself more, find out what I was really made of, made me stronger and allowed me to grow into an even better version of myself.

And I also I realized that sometimes, finding that inner cleavage can seem impossible. In life sometimes, just when you think you are confident with who you are, something or someone will knock you to your knees, creating a cycle of self-doubt, confusion and pain that will leave you feeling less than beautiful, on the inside and outside.

In many ways for me and my own personal experience, my divorce was harder than my cancer. Not to take my cancer diagnosis lightly, nor the cancer diagnosis of so many, including friends and family of mine who would have given anything to be here one more day. However, the lessons I learned from my cancer helped prepare me for what I have endured over the past six years with my divorce.

I know for me, opening up my heart again after my wasband left me for my ex-friend was so scary. Not only did I not think I could find love again, but I also didn’t think I could risk having my heart shattered into a million pieces if it didn’t work out. The wounds of betrayal left me jaded, scared and wondering if I could ever trust someone else again with my heart. But then I met Jason, a wonderful man who eventually became my husband. I had a second chance. It wasn’t easy getting there. There were times when we were dating where my insecurities and fears made me second guess whether I was willing to love again and if my broken heart would heal enough to love again. I didn’t trust myself, much less anyone else. Add to that the physical scars from my cancer and the fact that I had only had sex with one person in my entire life, and I wasn’t sure I could really put myself out there again.

Jason and I took it slow. We got to know each other, had deep conversations, cried, laughed a lot, shared the intimate details of our lives — our hopes, our dreams, our fears, stories about kids and our families. We were raw and authentic and held nothing back, all before we ever met in person and developed a physical relationship. The fact that we lived two hours apart early in the relationship was probably a good thing. It forced us to take things slow from the physical perspective too. To really get to know each other. We both had

Kim Becking and her son Brandon during her cancer treatment in 2002.





Kim's beautiful blended family — Adelaide (13), Jack (10), Jason, Kim and Brandon (16) — full of love and proving to us all that life does give us second chances if we are willing to take them.

healing yet to do. We both were mending our broken hearts — him after losing his wife Sarah and me after losing my wasband to my ex-friend.

I was cautious and protective. I was still putting a bit of a wall up with Jason. And then I finally realized that I wasn't afraid of falling in love with Jason, I was really afraid of having my heart broken again. And that wasn't fair to him or to me. Finally, I just let go of my fears and my past and told Jason I was going "all in." Over time, that allowed me to truly release my fears and open my heart again. You see, although my heart had healed, my fears were still there, holding me back. I realized that I cannot let my past dictate my future relationships or my future happiness.

In the end, we all have our scars. Some of these scars are physical, some emotional. We have to face them and learn how to deal with them in our own way. We must be honest with ourselves and others and not let them hijack our present and future happiness.

Six years after my divorce and fourteen years after my cancer, I am happily remarried to this amazing man who accepts me for who I am — 45 years young, with my battle scars, but with each year, they are fading. My scars are still here, some seen, some unseen, but they are a part of who I

am — they don't define me. I have learned from them and grown because of them, but they don't paralyze or define who I am as a person. I won't let them. I will continue to love me for ME. And when life hands me more hard, I will still LOVE ME, with grace, grit and gratitude.

The past several years has been a chapter of reinvention and creating a new life on my own terms. It hasn't come without sacrifice or without facing my fears and insecurities, and those "what if's," It has come without having to face my own inner bullies and without wondering if I could trust again - fully enough to truly make my new love and new marriage work. Without wondering if Jason will leave, just like my wasband did. Without tears. And more tears. Without wondering if I was enough. Without doubting my abilities as a mom. But what I have learned is that I have love. Love for myself. Love for my family. Love for life. And in the end, I am merely practicing, not perfecting life. I am doing the best I can and that is more than enough. The hope, love and joy outweigh any negativity that my own mind may create on a daily basis.

For me, my unexpected change and challenges of cancer and divorce took me to the darkest places in my life.

But with grace, grit and gratitude, I learned to love more and judge less. I found more openness and perspective. Most of all, I found more love — for myself, for those around me, and for life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kim Becking is a nationally recognized and sought after author, blogger, motivational speaker and life and divorce coach. Kim's book, *Nordie's at Noon - the Personal Stories of Four Women "Too Young" for Breast Cancer*, has received national acclaim and been featured in publications such as People, SELF, and The New York Times. She is a regular contributor to The Huffington Post and DivorcedMoms.com. As a cancer, divorce and life thriver, Kim now helps other women thrive and create an awesome life they love after unexpected change. To learn more about Kim's programs, visit www.lookingforwardlivinglife.com. Connect with her on social media and sign up to receive her tips on *Looking Forward, Living Fully and Loving Life*, along with other great resources on her website.

INSPIRE

STAY IN THE DAY

BY CATHY ALVES DAVIS

ISN'T IT INTERESTING HOW FOUR LITTLE WORDS CAN ACTUALLY GO THE DISTANCE TO HELP SAVE SOMEONE'S LIFE? I KNOW BECAUSE THESE EXACT WORDS HELPED TO SAVE MINE. I HEARD THE WORDS *STAY IN THE DAY* MANY TIMES BEFORE, STATED IN VARIOUS WAYS, BUT I PAID THEM NO MIND.

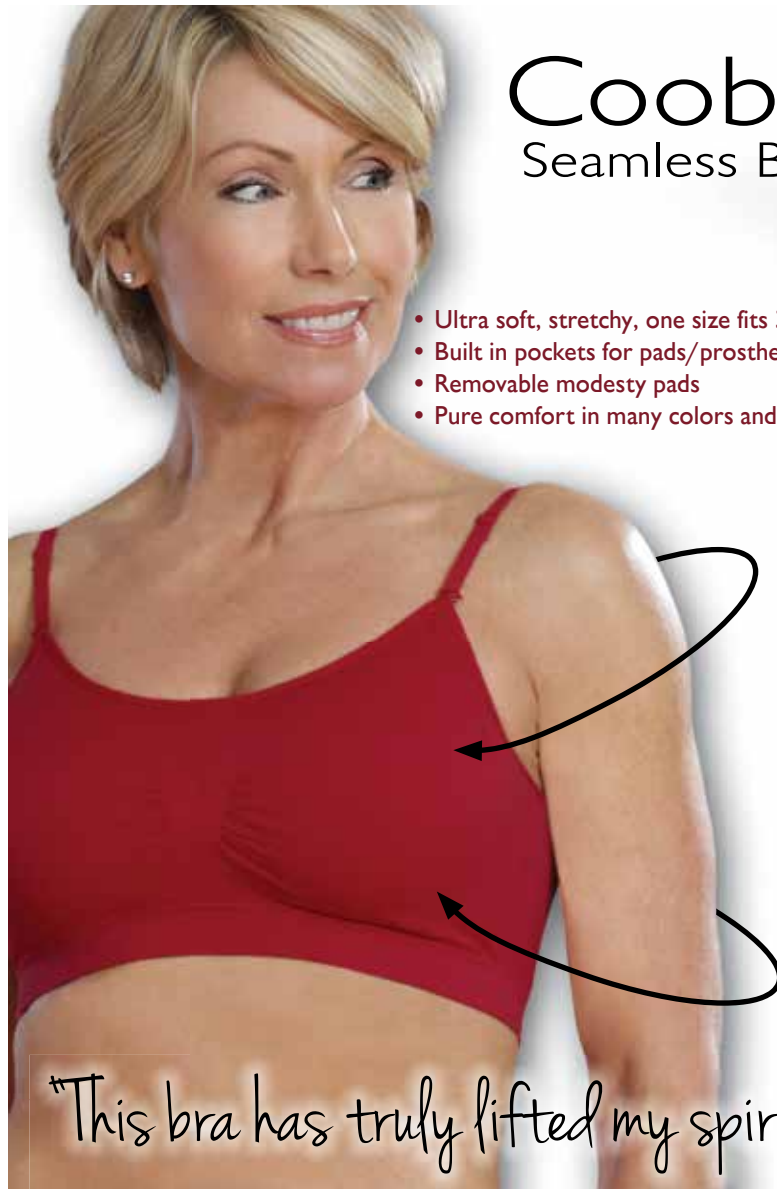


I would learn in a very personal and life-changing way to *stay in the day*. But combined with the miracle I was given, my life was remarkably transformed. In 1998 I headed up a company in Northern Virginia where I lived with my husband, George, and our three grown children, Merritt, Blake and Joanna. I also helped my mother, who became a widow at a young age, along with my handicapped uncle, whenever they needed me. I was definitely way too busy to *stay in the day*. Those four simple words eluded me back then. The business world is always about tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, but never about today. Today was always a given but tomorrow, now that was something to plan for and to worry about.

Late one evening as I lay on my bed performing my regular breast self-examination, I found a jagged edge in the familiar fibroid shelf in my left breast. I wasn't concerned because I had a mammogram six months earlier and my results were normal with no suspicious findings. I told myself that I was healthy. I walked every morning on my treadmill, watched my waistline and ate right even before it was in vogue to do so. I was invincible, so I thought, and no matter how prevalent breast cancer was in our society, I had more to think about that jagged edge. So I pushed it out of my mind. I had even ignored several health warnings that came my way, having nothing to do with breast cancer but everything to do with my immune system being run down. The stress of my job consumed my life as I continued to persevere each day, never thinking of myself.

At my sister's insistence I finally went for a checkup and mentioned my findings to my doctor. I was then sent for a sonogram and a repeat mammogram. The mammogram again came back normal, but the sonogram showed a large growth underneath the fibroid shelf. I was then sent for a biopsy and after the surgeon captured my tissue sample that was filled with fluid, he still wasn't concerned. He explained that it was probably some sort of benign growth that needed to be removed. I was thankful that no one was talking about cancer! A week later I called for my results and instead of a nurse picking up, the surgeon took the phone and gave me the shocking news that no woman wants to hear. He continued in a saddened and apologetic tone, advising me that the biopsy not only proved cancerous but the diagnosis was aggressive stage III breast cancer. That was the day that all my tomorrows became suspect.

*A breast cancer survivor gave me four powerful words of **stay in the day** at a time when it was all too overwhelming, yet the words she gave me seemed to quickly take hold.*



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After I was all cried out, I started to think about a second opinion and possible treatment. I am originally from the Boston area and my family was able to secure an appointment for me with a reputable doctor for the following week. I thought I had heard all the bad news when the doctors in Boston told me that due to the size of the mass, they believed it had spread to my lungs. I was then sent for a CT Scan to determine the true extent of my diagnosis. For some reason I couldn't believe I had cancer, nor could I take the word into my soul. I had been praying constantly, praying and believing for all things good. That's when I went back to my childhood faith, my foundation. A faith so powerful that it healed me of severe asthma attacks in the 1950s when there was no medicine.

I lay there on the CT table as the dye injected in my vein worked its way through my body. The CT Scan machine droned loudly at my feet while the large clock on the wall ticked away the seconds. I lay there praying and begging God for my life, when a miraculous thing happened. My prayer drifted off into the distance as peace enveloped me. Then God spoke, as He had done when I was a child gasping for air. He allowed me to know that I would survive and that one day I would go on to write a book of hope and inspiration. God's communication was brief, but I knew right then and there that I would survive and I would do as He asked of me. By the grace of God the scan revealed that my mass, the size of a navel orange, had not spread.

It was there in Boston that a breast cancer survivor gave me those four powerful words of *stay in the day*. She knew I had about fifteen months of treatment ahead of me. It was all too overwhelming to comprehend, yet the words she gave me seemed to quickly take hold.

I have read that it takes a little over two months to change a habit. So I began my challenge of staying in the day from that day forward. And if I got off course from any frightening information I was given, my husband George was quick to remind me that we were going to *stay in the day*. As the days and weeks passed by I got really good at staying in the day. During my overall treatment I developed three large blood clots that were lodged in my jugular vein. It was an intense time for my doctors, and a life threatening time for me, but by then I had become accustomed to staying in the day. In the day I was given, I was alive. I refused to let the 'what ifs' plague me.



HERE'S HOW I STAY IN THE DAY:

- First, I wake up every morning being grateful. This sets the stage for my day. My gratitude helps to create my healthy attitude.
- I say a morning prayer over my life and give the day to God.
- Every day I say out loud to the universe, "Yes, *stay in the day* that's what I plan to do." I repeat it over and over throughout the day. My brain hears the reaffirming words when said out loud, and they sink deeper into my subconscious. Then, whenever I need the phrase it quickly comes to mind.
- When I find my mind going down a negative road of what if's, I take a deep breath and refocus by reminding myself to *stay in the day*.
- I made a list of the positive and negative people in my life. The positive people are the ones I want to be with more often. If there are negative people that I cannot stay away from, I put them on notice, saying I choose not to be around any negativism. I keep positive things in my mind and in my life; inspirational books, tape series, and positive phrases placed in different parts of my home. When I walk into my kitchen, the first thing I see hanging over my fridge is *Expect A Miracle*.



- I changed the pictures in my home to reflect my new mindset.
- I take a walk each day with a smile on my face. I make sure that my mind is actively aware of the beauty of nature that surrounds me. I am not problem solving, rather living in the moment. I look closely at things I never truly noticed before; like the first flowers poking through the ground in the spring, the warmth of the sun on my face, the birds chirping overhead. Nature stimulates our senses and allows us to see things outside ourselves.
- Every day I do something for someone else. I started mentoring breast cancer patients when I was a patient myself. Focusing on others helps us to *stay in the day* and not think of our own problems.

I was able to go through a challenging bankruptcy and a stem cell transplant by staying in the day. You can read how I handled it in the book God told me I would write that I titled *Myrcles*. Let my words encourage you to awaken each morning with a renewed sense of purpose. Make *stay in the day* your new mantra and let God take care of the rest. We are only promised today; be blessed and make it a good one.

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Through the Storms

BY HOLLY STROUP

“Storms make trees take deeper roots.”

— DOLLY PARTON

Life often brings storms and in some storms we have no choice but to walk through them. These are storms I label as “life changing adversities” which transforms a person from the inside out and you are forever changed.

As a survivor of breast cancer, lower limb amputation, and domestic violence, I learned as I moved through these storms that the common debilitating denominators were fear and a sense of hopelessness. Through these storms, I also learned that it is not the storm we face but our perception of the storm that determines if we become a victim or a victor.

In 2010, I was diagnosed with breast cancer while living in Mesa, AZ. My cancer journey caused another drastic transformation in me and the way I look at life. When I was diagnosed with breast cancer I had no idea where to turn or what to do. I felt paralyzed with fear and completely overwhelmed. I remember seeing the doctors’ mouths moving and hearing sound coming out but I couldn’t comprehend what they were saying. I couldn’t wrap my brain around any part of this diagnosis!

In order to help manage my fear, I knew that I had to control what was going through my mind. The old school mindset was a diagnosis of cancer meant you were going to die. But I knew where I had come from and I knew the miracles God had done for me. I was never supposed to have made it to my early 20’s and here I was 48; two years prior to this I was in an electric scooter and had quit driving for almost three years because I had lost my eye sight to the point that I



couldn’t read. I knew God didn’t bring me through all of that just to let me die from this.

At the time of my cancer diagnosis, I was a case study at the National Institute of Health and was on a research injection for a genetic disorder which at one point had taken my eye sight and eventually led to my amputation. I needed to get many questions answered, as well as get all of my doctors on board and connected with the case study team at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, MD.

I had two mammograms, an ultrasound, a needle biopsy, and a lumpectomy. Once all the tests results were in, it was determined that the original lump was at the 10 o’clock position on my left breast. It was ductal

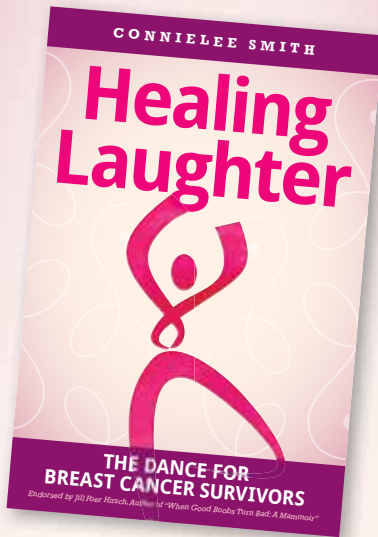
carcinoma in situ.

I chose to have a bi-lateral mastectomy followed immediately with reconstruction. The surgery was 7 ½ hours, which consisted of removing the breast tissue and placing expanders on both sides.

I remember waking up in my room that night just looking at the wall in front of me. I reached up and said “they are gone” and my grieving begun. I was 48 years old. My right ankle was amputated two years prior to this and now no breasts. Wow, reality sucks. I have always prayed that God would help keep me focused on Him because He is life and I was going to live. I always repeated what Jesus had said in the Bible, “As He is so am I in this world.” Jesus was never sick His entire life and since I am made in His image then I am healthy too.

I got a membership to my local YMCA with the intention of using exercise to ward off depression and despair in hopes I wouldn’t be put on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs and to build my stamina and strength back up.

For almost six months after the mastectomy I didn’t talk about my diagnosis to anyone but my sister and my daughter. I didn’t want to hear “Oh I’m so sorry. I had a friend that died for breast cancer” or “Are you afraid of dying?” The voices in my own head were challenging enough to control without listening to other people’s fears and words of discouragement. I was out of touch in my thoughts and in my body. I was in shock for almost a year before I realized I had been going through the motions before I realized I needed to step up to honor my faith and beliefs.



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Throughout the medical journey — fear would come and I would put my headphones on and sing praises to God because I knew that praise precedes the victory. I also knew that you could not think negative thoughts and listen to positive uplifting loud music at the same time! I would dig deeper into the Bible and hold continuous conversations with God. Yep, transformation is never easy but always necessary.

I reached out to other cancer patients and survivors and began asking questions about their personal journeys. I was and continue to

be in total “awe” of the inner strength I have seen in other people in their battle with cancer. My heart always goes out to women when they cry because they are so sick from the treatments while fighting for their lives and then their hair begins to fall out, some experience weight gain, some end up with scars from mastectomies, damaged skin from chemo and burns from radiation. I found many women felt a loss of personal value and self-esteem as a result of these side effects. They also face paralyzing fear and overwhelming sense of hopelessness, as I was. I became very passion-



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ate about helping them in their experiences.

I obtained two certificates of completion as a Mastectomy Fitter (Fit Specialist) and started teaching women how to properly keep a file and journal of their cancer journey that included treatments, medications, weight loss/gain, dates of surgery, how to read and listen to their bodies, properly communicate with their health care providers and caregivers, as well as other significant information. I found that by educating people and helping them get organized in the beginning of their journey, many experienced a reduction in their fears and anxieties.

After 2½ years of clean cancer screen-

ings I moved to Indiana to be closer to my daughter and her family. As people heard my story, I began to get calls from across the country asking for help or information for themselves, a friend, or a loved one that was going through a journey of breast cancer. I decided to start my own business to include the services that I have been providing to people in a cancer journey, as well as breast cancer, but I wanted to add more to my services so I went back to school. I currently hold a certification in oncology esthetics and am working on my esthetic licence.

By teaching others how to take control of their thoughts, emotions, diets, and be an active participant in their health and well-

being I learned to be thankful for my journey with breast cancer because I can give back with true compassion on a level that is so deeply fulfilling I can't even begin to explain the amount of joy and peace that fills my heart.

I can't take the journey of breast cancer away from anyone but I can help in guiding them through their own transformation with education, helping ease some of the physical discomfort caused from the treatments, and be a shoulder to lean on... and together, we are transformed through the storms.

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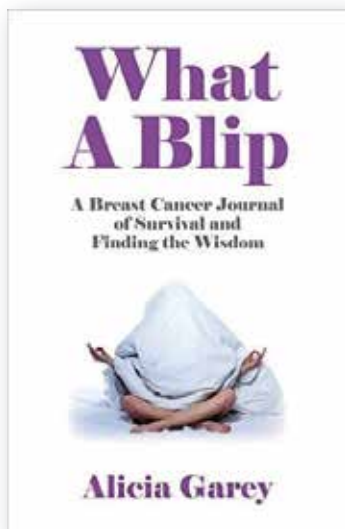
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Journey Unknown is the author's expression of her powerful feelings while undergoing breast cancer treatment. This 2012- 2nd edition includes letters answering the question, "How did my cancer affect you?" M. Barnhart won the 2014 "Words of Inspiration" contest held by American Breast Care. The author's website includes the winning words and an interview video.



Margaretbarnhart.com

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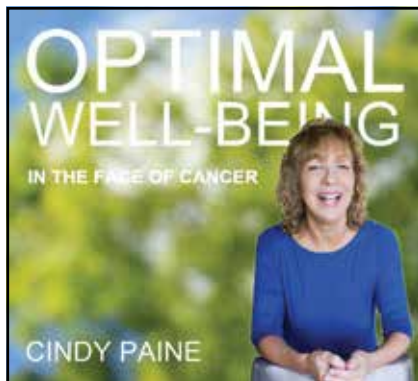
breast cancer
FREEBIES

www.breastcancerfreebies.com

Website provided by Bethany Kandel, a journalist from NYC, that lists hundreds of free products and services for breast cancer patients and survivors, including wigs, retreats, magazines, prosthetics, and housecleaning.

Pink Pages directory

Life Coach



Cindy Paine is a 12-year breast cancer survivor, author, life-coach, speaker, and retreat leader.

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Breast Cancer Wellness Magazine is on a mission to help restore financial well-being for women, men and families after being diagnosed with breast cancer. BCW is very excited to launch this financial wellness webinar series with Jane Honeck. Jane created this webinar program specifically for the financial challenges that arise for those who have faced trauma in their lives and for those who wish to learn how to have more abundance in their lives. She has worked with multi-millionaires, bankruptcies, couples, singles, and large and small businesses to bring both balance and financial wellness into lives across the country. Jane is excited to share her decades of compassion, understanding and lifeskills with all of us in this transformational webinar series.

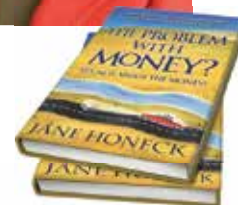


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