Bravura

March 30, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

I faced cancer the way I have faced other traumatic issues in my life — with a strong attitude that hid my fears and shored up my defenses from anyone or anything upsetting me or getting into my walls.

You know, I read a book recently that had a main character talking about how bad things happened and then it would mean the rest of their life should be "clear sailing" because they used up all the bad stuff… This made me jump a little because yes, I have had some things happen in my life before I hit like 33 that you think would have used up all of my "bad luck."

Again, I do not really believe in "luck" — I believe we make our own luck and one thing I definitely believe now, post breast cancer, is that we can work on manifesting the positive, the good or at least put a spotlight on it and obscure the rest.

When people told me, during my cancer diagnosis and treatments, that I was "brave," I wanted to punch them. I did not have a choice but to do what I was told to do by my doctors. Instead, I settled on being "tough," but now I think it goes beyond toughness and goes into "bravura," which is more "cleverness" and "skill" than brave.

At first, when I started building out this website from the blog to include the children's book and the career after cancer initiative, it crossed my mind, "Why am I doing this — what if I die?" — so even though I am so "positive," I do still sometimes succumb to the fear.

The way I manage it is to keep moving forward and to keep thinking about how I can help others with my perspective, my passion and my experiences. Cancer does not define me but it did put a lot of things into focus for me that used to be unclear. I know now what I want to do with the time I have left and that is to help others and to enjoy my life, my kids and my husband, family and friends.

I am not doing this to be "famous" — in fact, I think that would suck (though I would LOVE to be able to "swipe up" in my Instagram stories so if I could get to 20k followers there, that would be great — ha). I just want to keep pushing my bravura and keep myself focused on how to help others in any way I can while enjoying life and all it has to offer.

This is what I do in the time between…

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.