The Magic Hour & Mama With Cancer

March 15, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

One of the worst things I have ever had to do is tell my kids I had cancer. As a parent, you just know you cannot show fear. It is funnily enough why I thought I never wanted to have kids — I used to fly to Italy for the weekend and would always look at moms with young children and feel so bad for them because when the plane hit turbulence, they could not show fear without freaking the fuck out of their kids. I could, though, because I was just a party of 1 thanks so much.

In fact, this summer, we flew as a family for the first time (not only was I against flying with children but I also could not afford to do it anyway so win, win…) well we finally went to Disney and thankfully, the plane ride was pretty smooth and no children were frightened on the flight. Though, all things considered, a thing like a bumpy plane ride is not something that can scare my kids. Or me, for that matter.

We faced something much, much scarier with me being diagnosed with cancer and though we present it as though it is over (and I guess it is), I still have that voice way down deep in my head that says, “What if…” but my soul and heart says, “No way!”

Obviously, no one can see the future and breast cancer and any cancer really is something that is never just “done” — no matter what, I carry with me this tiny fear and these big “issues” in terms of medications, ovary suppression, menopause, reduced cognitive abilities, fatigue etc. etc., but if you read my past blogs and know me at all, I think you know I am leery to ever complain. I just do. I don’t complain.

However, if I am being totally honest, my body and mind and experiences are no longer the same as it once was as it maybe could have been but I am still here, G*@damnit, so I cannot really give a fuck about it.

Instead, I just live. I live differently, but I was always a little different anyway. When I found out about magichour.org, I was intrigued but also not sure if I should sign up. They offer free photoshoots for patients, people in need, etc. I am a mom and my kids are now 10 and 7 so we have had professional photos done in the past. My daughter’s communion 3 years ago was the last time, though, that we did so (see the photo at the top).

When I look at those and other photos we have, I do not recognize myself in them, like at all.

This new post cancer me has chiseled out and become someone who I guess I used to know — my low high school weight, my cropped out hair, my wariness behind my eyes, my posture, oh and

missing a freakin boob all make these old photos dated and all pre-cancer.

So, signing up for this when I was still swollen with excess weight, bald and not really sure how to look at myself in the mirror was not easy but I did it anyway. I thought it would help to have new memories, new professional photos of who mom is — this mom, not the old one who had pros and cons to her but the biggest pro of course was what I never appreciated — my health.

When my application was received, we got word that a local photographer was being contacted to connect with us. That local photographer was Jessica (I wrote about our shoot here).

The photos are amazing full stop. They show a family anew — this family, where the husband and wife actually appreciate and show love to one another and where the children know mom is not a superhero per se but a tough broad and even the loyal pup gets in on the action...

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/magic-hour-mama-cancer