Spoiler Alert: I’m Doing Just Fine.

April 29, 2018 By Lindsay Norris

It’s been a long time since I’ve written anything, well over a year. I don’t really have any good excuse or reason behind it, I guess cancer fightin’ keeps you busy. After my letter to my patients got the attention it did, I began to get a lot of emails. Really amazing, sweet words from other survivors, caregivers, and healthcare workers- I loved the positive response it got and I couldn’t have asked for a better distraction during treatment. Looking back, I really needed it. So many messages were coming in that I set it up so emails from my blog contacts went directly into a separate folder that I planned on opening periodically to respond to… which I did, for a while. Of course plans and reality can be two separate things, and time passes faster than you realize. The other day I got into the folder and there were 297 unopened emails- eek. The people pleaser in me had a minor freak out. As I glanced through, I noticed many were commenting that I hadn’t posted in a while which was concerning to them- one writer said “When you’re talking about cancer, no news rarely means good news. Please let us know how you’re doing”. Maybe it was the emails, or the nice weather we’ve been having, or the recent good lab results… but all the sudden I’ve been inspired to start writing again. I really do enjoy it, and now that life has settled down a bit, maybe I’ll be able to do it more and catch up.

I have lots of updates, stories, and thoughts to share about the last year and a half, and it was actually quite dramatic at times. The other night I jotted down over 20 different post topics I’d like to write about. I want to tell you about surgery, chemo, scans, the amazing opportunities I’ve been given, all of it! But the big update for now: I’m doing just fine. I’ve been cancer free for about 15 months and life is actually pretty close to normal. I’m still working full time with the cancer patients I adore, constantly loving on my sweet kids and husband, gained back almost 17 pounds, and my energy level is about standard for a mom of two. It is nice to begin to look and feel like myself again. Really, I’m just trying to figure this whole “survivor” thing out. There’s certainly not as many resources out there for this phase of things, and to be honest, sometimes the word itself feels like a jinx. My last chemo was 9 months ago (in July 2017), so for now I see my Oncologists every 3 months with tumor marker labs (CEA) and get CT scans every 6 months. My cancer has a high recurrence rate, my doctors have been up front with me about this from the start. However, most people recur within the first two years after surgery, so I’m over half way there… and every time I can sneak by another 3 month visit with no concerns- I feel a huge sigh of relief. This euphoric feeling usually lasts a little while… then doubt starts to whisper a little louder and louder… until I have new proof to shut it up again.

Living on this repeat rollercoaster is exhausting, but time seems to keep passing anyway and I’m very thankful for that. There’s no denying I’m different now. I’ve come out on the other side a

more determined (and more anxious) person and – at the risk of sounding cliche- I have a new perspective about what truly matters. Are there long term physical side effects of the treatment I went through?- yep. Has the fear and anxiety gone away?- NOPE! Am I able to go a full day without thinking about it?- not yet. But for now, I'll continue living the best life I can, 3 months at a time, while stopping to feel the sunshine on my face every chance I get. And I'm doing just fine.

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