Terrified ... But Doing It Anyway ...

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Right now, I am terrified BUT I am doing it anyway. In just under 60 days, I will be embarking on a big trip and leaving my kids, my puppy, hubby, etc. and I am really, really scared.

Recently, I was with my son having a special day for the two of us (I had done a day with my daughter a few months ago and my son realized I had yet to have his special one-on-one day and he was NOT happy so we squeezed it in last week) — and at exactly 2:10pm, my alarm went off to “remind” me to pick up my daughter from school (yes, I let him have a day off). I turned off the alarm and said, “That is so I do not forget to get sissy.” He looked at me and said, “You would never forget to get either of us… Now daddy, on the other hand…” and he shook his head.

My kids’ whole sense of schedule and security is from me. Despite going through stage 3 breast cancer, they still recognized that I was helping and giving directions in the background (weakly as I was SO not able to do what I normally did, but whatever, they recognized I was still “in the know”). My husband, bless his heart, struggles with the day to day and so much is happening right now with him that I CANNOT share that it is a constant struggle at times.

Since my treatment ended, despite me wanting to keep my lessened role of Type-A uber-parent I have to still be the one who orchestrates the schedule, the pick ups, the drop offs, the lunches, the homework … etc., etc. I love doing it because I CAN and this, I know, is a great privilege and not a chore or a bad thing. There are days and weekends where I am zipping back and forth, here and there and running around like a lunatic and it hits me that there is always a worst case scenario and THIS IS NOT IT (thank GOD).

Now, soon, I will be getting on my first transatlantic flight since having children. The flight in and of itself is not a HUGE deal — I used to jump on these types of long haul flights for shits and giggles over a long weekend. The true issue or change is that I will be leaving my children for 10 days. I have to keep picturing the goodbyes, the sitting on a flight and NOT BEING ABLE TO TURN AROUND if God forbid I needed to do so.

This is absolutely scary for me. I remember one time, I was en route to Europe and my brother got hit with a high fever and I called from the place (using the phones connected to the seats — this was pre-cell phones) and being so worried that he was so sick and I was on my way out of the country. Of course, he is not my son (but for some intents and purposes, at times, I had been a

motherly figure for him).

Now, the thought of going away is scary but I also know I have to do it. This trip is so important for me and it is such a big way to be clear that I am “Lisa” and not just “mom.” I also am traveling for a specific purpose beyond returning to my home away from home, Italy, where I lived as a 21-year-old grad student, and to reunite with some old friends and my goddaughter who I last saw when she was 1.5 years old — almost 14 years ago — but also to visit San Giovanni Rotondo and Padre Pio. This is a pilgrimage for me and my dad. We are going there because (I feel) we have been called to go.

I just need to do it and pray, hope and don’t worry. What have you done that scares you? Is it weird that I was less scared of cancer then I am of this trip? Just in my head? … If you were a betting person, would you bet I do it or chicken out? Part of writing this is to force myself to not be able to chicken out!

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