Time for the Big Squeeze

December 20, 2017 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

This is a tough week for me. I have not been sleeping well and everyone in my family is a "snotmonster" and all congested and coughing (including me).

Of course, this was making me think I should be concerned for me and my health given the whole cancer thing but then I realized that if everyone in my house is doing it, it should be ok, "should be" the operative term.

When I was feeling sorry for myself this morning, something crossed my Facebook feed that made me stop and smack myself. It is the story of a 5-year-old girl diagnosed with DiPG the worst kind of brain cancer and given 9-12 months to live. That shook me right up and I am including the link to the YouCaring site so if you can, you will donate something to this family. I do not know them AND I am unemployed but I donated $10. I would have done more, if I could. I know I cannot donate or help every family who is hit with cancer for a child but I will say again that cancer sucks but it is so much worse for a child—give what you can here and if you cannot give, please share the link.

Tomorrow I go to Sloan for my yearly mammogram and sonogram on my remaining breast (good old lefty). It is something that has been bothering me subconsciously and I think that is why I have been unable to sleep too well this week like at all. I have been tired and groggy and snotty (not the teenage variety but literal snot) since Monday (and even for some of the weekend, too).

My remaining boob has been prodded and checked at each and every follow up over the last year (with my clinical trial I was seeing my oncologist monthly for a bit and each visit I got manhandled lol), AND I check it every month on the "feel it on the first" campaign and it all feels ok. Tomorrow, though, is my first mammogram and ultrasound since the big Diagnosis and after that whole cancer plot twist last year, I guess it is normal to be freaked out.

And I think I am kind of freaking out. I mean, I didn't freak out a month ago or even a week ago but I am kind of freaked out now.

I am working hard on putting it all in perspective and seeing that family's story about the young girl being diagnosed definitely is making me put it in perspective and just take a deep breathe, meditate, pray and just deal with whatever it is. I know that my worries today, my freak out right now, is not going to help or even preclude any bad news from potentially happening nor will it make me feel better if/when I get good news, either—it is just a waste of energy to worry right now. I know I need to stay focused and smile but damn today, the day before I go in to sit in that

waiting room in that robe waiting to be called and squeezed and prodded, I am freaking out.

I hope that I get it out of my system today but between everyone's cold, coughing and congestion (it is like leaky faucets over here, no joke) I just know I need to rest and not think about it. I should instead by thinking, well, it could always be worse so let me just enjoy today, right now, no matter what happens tomorrow, I have this time between and yes, we are all feeling yucky and I am exhausted and not at all ready for tomorrow but I will get it over and done and survive it because that is all I know how to do. It is how I got through chemotherapy just that focus to just get it done knowing it was something I had to do in order to get to "cured" or "healthy."

Did you freak out at your first follow up mammogram and sonogram after breast cancer? How did you deal with it? I know now for next year that I need to take better care of me before these testing dates come up because I do think if I did not feel so yucky and had been able to sleep better, I would not be as freaked out as I am ... (it is like a game of what came first, the chicken or the egg though because I probably did not sleep well because of the worry for the upcoming test...)

What do you think?

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