# What I Wish You Knew...

Don’t pity me because I got sick — but DO understand how quick the line between health and sickness can be crossed.

August 9, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

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So here I am, a year and 9 months post diagnosis and still writing and talking about what it means to be diagnosed with cancer…

Some of you might kindly wonder why I’m still writing and talking about these things now and not just putting it behind me and moving on…

Some of you might rudely think I’m just stuck and need to get over myself and come to think of it you’re sick of seeing my body out there as an example of living after cancer…

Whatever it is you think I learned the hard way not to give a good dang about it. No offense please.

The idea is that God gave me the ability to write, to tell my story, to use my voice and shout it out and no matter what I don’t feel the time has come for me to sit down and shut up already.

Why?

Would it be easier for my kids if I shut up and stopped sharing? Well, since they see me every day markedly different than I was before, no I don’t think so. No matter what even if I had reconstructed my right breast I would still look different and feel different too — my kids are used to popping (and I mistyped that at first as pooping lol that’s true too) in on me all the time despite locking doors and being private they can still and have still at times found me mid-clothing change or in a wardrobe mishap (it doesn’t just happen to celebrities check out my pics from my luau we hosted and you can peep my scar instead of a boob).

I’m not ashamed of my scars or my body (anymore). I love myself from head to toe and I know there are many women out there and men too who have or haven’t been hit with the cancer stick and don’t appreciate or love themselves. It’s an epidemic and it’s also something that can’t be helped I guess.

You see, there are things I wish you knew about yourself that you just probably can’t know unless you get hit with the cancer stick, and trust me, I will never thank cancer for nothing, but I did learn some stuff and as an educator since, well, birth, learning is my favorite thing to do.

So here are some things I wish you knew:

1. Your body is your friend — love yourself, appreciate your body for not failing you, for being strong and carrying you through your days and nights as you work, love and live.

2. Don’t pity me because I got sick — but DO understand how quick the line between health and sickness can be crossed and just remember to always know what you need to be well and that no matter what there isn’t a guarantee you’ll never get sick.

3. Don’t sweat the small stuff — and it’s all small! Seriously, I see you all worried about what someone thinks of you or something equally small and inconsequential from my seat in my Chemo chair history and all I can say is that you are wasting your time, wasting your health on something that ultimately doesn’t matter. The only things that matter to me are A) am I helping others? and B) am I a good mom/wife/friend etc?

We all, deep down, crave a meaningful life with relationships and love but what we do is posture around like that doesn’t matter and fret about every little thing (I know I did). And yes it’s in that order because I do believe I was a great mom always, though I wasn’t a good wife or friend, but that’s ok; I learned the hard way how important that is — helping others is really in my opinion the currency of life…

4. Know your worth and don’t squander your time, attention and health on stuff that doesn’t matter in the long run. Find something you enjoy doing no matter how small no matter how silly it seems and do it — try not to worry about bills they will always be there but do try to find something that will fulfill you.

5. Do not stress — stress is the absolute worst thing for your health your body and everything around you — I used to stress and worry about everything then I got stage 3 cancer and now when I should, you know, be worried I realize the futility of worry — it did nothing to keep me well to get me well or anything and that brings me to my last lesson today…

6. Don’t ever think “it can’t be me” — it can be you — risk analysis and or thinking in terms of never are a big way to lead to disaster — I thought it would never be me but I did my screening mammograms anyway — imagine if I didn’t — I would probably be dead.

Every day is a gift; live in the moment and know who has your back and always keep them close.

This is what I do in the time between.

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