



Good Karma

Living Well . . . With Cancer

Life is full of choices and our lives are largely the result of the choices we've made. Personal wellness is also a choice. It's not easy to always eat right and get the recommended amount of physical activity. Thank goodness there's room for deviation. LoneStart understands this.

What most people don't get is that it's just not that difficult to choose a healthy lifestyle. Making better choices most of the time, is much easier and more achievable than having to make the best choice all the time. I made a conscious decision as a young adult and chose to be a healthy person. I accepted that no one else could or would do this for me. I was responsible. I didn't want to have to feel guilty or blame myself if I had a poor quality of life or a life cut short by the poor lifestyle decisions I had made.

By the time I was thirty years old, I had proclaimed to myself and others that I wanted to live to be 100 years old—this became my ultimate goal. I frequently mentioned this goal when talking to others as doing so served to help me stay on track with chosen healthy behaviors. My life was great, my health was great, I was approaching my 50th birthday, and I was half-way to my goal and going strong.

Then early in June, 2008, I discovered a lump in my breast which turned out to be cancer. My world fell apart, I was never supposed to get anything like this, I was doing all the right things, why me, what had I done wrong? I was scared, worried, angry, and bewildered. Hadn't I done all the right things to prevent cancer? I went through all the risk factors, and other than being female and getting older, I had no other risk factors for developing breast cancer. I knew that I hadn't done anything to cause this cancer and after much agony and self reflection, it struck me, that for whatever reason, I had cancer.

I started to look at the positive health habits I had been following and how these had and would continue to benefit me. What I now believe is that I had something else, not connected to lifestyle habits that caused my cancer. Could the fact that I lead a healthy lifestyle have delayed this cancer's onset? I think so, and what a benefit as cancer treatment and the prognosis for

any stage of breast cancer is much better today than it was even five or ten years ago. Because my overall health was good; I knew stood a better chance of dealing with the side effects of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. Not only was I physically better suited for this treatment, I was mentally prepared. I knew my body would not let me down.

And guess what? Two surgeries, six months of chemotherapy, and with two weeks of radiation to go, I've come through it all in fine shape. Has it always been easy, no, but I can't imagine going through all this with an unhealthy body. Thank goodness I was well-nourished and fit and was able to continue to eat healthy and stay physically active through my treatment. My faith and belief in personal wellness has only been strengthened through this experience. God willing, I will celebrate my 100th birthday here on this earth.

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