

Linda Maxwell Evans

“On October 22, 2008, my doctor called to say that she needed me to come into the office to discuss what she explained as “something unusual” on my most recent breast sonogram. The reason I remember this so well is because the day before, my father passed away from lung cancer. The only thing on my mind was, “I have to make airline reservations and plan a funeral.” My mother and my family needed me, and cancer was not going to get in my way.

For the past 10 years, I had gotten routine mammograms every six months. My sister was diagnosed with and treated for breast cancer nearly four years prior, and I have always been conscious of my high risk for the disease. So when I returned to the doctor two weeks later for a biopsy and they delivered my breast cancer diagnosis, I was upset, but not completely shocked.

But even still I began to ask myself “Why me? What did I do to deserve this?” ... But then I thought “Why not me? This disease is so prevalent in the world – nearly everyone’s life has been affected in some way by it.” And with all the blessings that God has given me, I refused to complain or feel sorry for myself. I believe that

no matter how bad a situation seems, someone else is always worse off. God was trying to get my attention, and I was listening. I chose to share the news with my family several weeks later, and I informed them of my decision to have surgery the day after Thanksgiving.

My diagnosis was a rare form of breast cancer – H2 positive - more easily treated than most, but more likely to reoccur. It had been caught early and was about 1 cm. I underwent a lumpectomy, 12 months of chemotherapy and 30 treatments of radiation.

Throughout my entire journey, I never felt afraid. The treatment was long and difficult, but I always remembered the words of Tupac Shakur when he said, “I know it seems hard sometimes, but remember one thing: Through every dark night, there is a bright day after that. So no matter how hard it gets, keep your chest out, keep your head up, and handle it.”

I know that I have become stronger, and I am more certain now that I can overcome any obstacle that comes my way. I encourage those facing a similar situation to be courageous, not afraid. Turn your fear into energy and use it to encourage

someone else. Surround yourself with positive influences, and seek out a source of strength greater than you.

Today, I focus on my purpose in life – my reason for being here. I often stop to focus on my blessings. I have become more aware of how precious each day is, and I have learned what it really means to “stop and smell the roses”. It has become even more important to me to spend time with my family – to laugh with them, allow them to make mistakes, and to love them unconditionally for all that they are. I value every minute of the life I have been given, and I look forward to each day with a renewed spirit.”

