

Cassandra Harper

“When diagnosed in May 2013 with stage 3B Inflammatory Breast Cancer – a rare and aggressive form that makes most people ask, “Why me?” – My thought was, “Why not me?” I have always been a person who sees the glass as half full, instead of half empty, and for me, even as serious as my diagnosis was, I tried to always have a positive attitude and keep the faith that I would be healed. You really don’t know how you’ll respond to something until you’re put in that situation, but I truly believe that having a positive mindset is half the battle. And what a battle it has been!



My journey began early one Sunday morning, May 5. I woke up and my right breast looked considerably larger than the left breast and felt much firmer with a hint of redness. Upon having a biopsy, the doctors originally thought I might have a bacterial infection, but after a week of treating me with antibiotics, there was no change. Further testing revealed that it indeed was cancer.

I remember the doctors telling me that, because I had an aggressive form of breast cancer that had spread to my lymph nodes, it would have to be treated aggressively. That made sense to me, and understanding and accepting that helped prepare me for everything I would go through during the next two years. Much has happened since my diagnosis – I’ve undergone one year of chemotherapy, had a bilateral mastectomy, received two months of radiation, went through five months of physical therapy (due to developing adhesive capsulitis or “frozen shoulder” during radiation) and had bilateral breast reconstruction. And my faith has been tested time and again. Oh, but God! There’s a song titled “After this,” and in it, there are lyrics that say “God specializes in things impossible.” So I knew there would be life after cancer, and God gets all the glory!

Through this journey, which has been a fight of a lifetime, I have come to believe my purpose for having cancer is to give others hope and inspiration. When I tell people that I have no regrets for having cancer,

I typically get an odd response or stare. But I truly don’t have regrets, and I have met many kind and wonderful people along the way. And most importantly, I am now cancer free! As I’ve heard someone say, “You beat up cancer.”

My message to anyone who has breast cancer, or any other life-threatening illness, is never give up-NEVER! We all have struggles, great and small, but there’s no testimony without a test. Two particular sermons from my pastor resonate with me—“There’s Purpose in Your Pain” and “Your Scars Tell Your Story.” Well, I’ve had the pain and the scars, so is sharing my story reaches and helps just one person, everything I have gone through is part of a blessing. My family, friends and co-workers said I gave them strength when I was diagnosed, and I am truly grateful for my continuing opportunities to educate others about this disease and share my story—and my strength and hope.”