



**JANICE MAGNUSSON**  
**Breast Cancer Survivor**



The Gift of Time

Time is measured by seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years.

As a mother of four wonderful children the many seconds, minutes and hours of my days were filled with the driving them to and from school and sports, preparing meals, watching their sports, helping with homework, listening and just being with them. I would then, fit in time with my busy husband, the house work, working outside the home- part time, and attending church. Then all of the sudden my time spent doing the things I loved changed in an instant.

It was just 5½ years ago that I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It came as a total shock to me and my family. I was too young, I didn't have a family history of it, I didn't smoke or drink and I didn't feel sick. I had just started having my mammogram when I turned 40.

The drive home from the doctors that day seemed to be the longest minutes of my life. The words "this doesn't look good" played over and over in my head. How would I tell my children?

Would I be here for my children when they were sad or needed their mother? Would I be here to see my children married? Would I ever be able to hold a future grandchild? I now prayed more fervently than I ever had before for TIME. Time to be with my husband and family, to do the motherly things I dreamed of as a little girl. I wanted TIME now more than ever.

I am a very emotional person and at that point I could not talk to anyone without a flood of tears. So with the whirlwind of doctor appointments, I hid at home unable to function in public. I was told that the tumor was too close to the chest wall and it was quite large between a stage 2 and 3. They would have to do 6 rounds of chemotherapy, a double mastectomy, 5 weeks of radiation, and then Reconstruction including another surgery. I had quite the year or more ahead of me.

I told the Doctors that I hated throwing up more than ever. I did not want to throw up. With the anti nausea medicines and a very strong will I was going to make it through without throwing up!!!



Because all of this was taking place during the cold and flu season it was suggested that I stay away from public places, and away from anyone who could be sick. That meant no church, no stores, no children's school or sporting events.

And my fight for TIME began...

I started Chemo the week after Thanksgiving. I did not want to be sick through the holidays but I also wanted to get all this over with and destroy that awful cancer inside of me. I was so scared going into my first Chemo session. Everyone there was so nice. It was a little scary but with my husband by my side I made it. But then day 10 came and I started running a fever. Not a good thing. So off the Emergency room we went. We told that kids we would be home in an hour or two. Well let's say that didn't happen. I spent the next 3 days in the hospital hooked up to all kinds of antibiotics. I was pretty sick. Finally the fever broke and I was on my home. Now my husband was extra careful that I didn't go anywhere to catch any germs.

The next 5 Chemo sessions went as well as expected. Now my husband would give me shots of Neuprogen to avoid the day 10 adventure I had after the first round of Chemo. It worked ...no more scary fevers.

At the end of all the Chemo sessions I can say I didn't throw up. Can't say I didn't feel like it at times. Surgery came just 3 weeks after Chemo. I opted to have a bi-lateral Mastectomy so not to worry about cancer appearing on the other side. Reconstruction was also started at that time. Radiation was much easier than Chemo. A year later reconstruction was finished. I have a scare but all tests came out fine. I am still a survivor. Now I am on a daily medicine for 5-10 years.

During this journey many GIFTS OF TIME came into my life.



My husband Scott gave me many hours of time. He changed his work schedule so he could go to all my doctor appointments, and Chemo sessions. He would come home at lunch to keep me company during the long days I was stuck in the house. He would go and watch the kids play sports and call me at half time and video some of their games too. He did the grocery shopping and did a good job; he didn't have to call home too many times. He did the Christmas shopping too. He also made sure that we still had our weekly dates. He would call ahead and get take out then we would park and eat dinner in the car. He was always there to comfort me when I felt like giving up.



Fudge is my sweet dog. He too gave many hours of unconditional love and attention. The moment I would come home from chemotherapy he would jump up on my legs and lie there. If I got up to use the bathroom he would wait at the door. This continued until I would feel a little better then he would go about his ways just keeping a close watch on me. Always being in the same room that I was in.



Many friends drove my children during this time. Right after Chemo and Surgeries I was unable to drive. They drove my children to and from school and sport practices. They shared a gift of time.



I had friends come with meals the day of chemo and a few days after. I didn't feel like eating but my family enjoyed the meals. Taking time to make a meal for us was greatly appreciated.



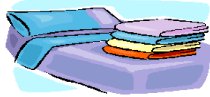
My hairstylist of many years gave me a gift of her time and came to my house to shave my head when my hair was falling out. She not only helped me with my physical problem (My hair) but helped me in an emotional way. Her concern and hugs were such a gift at a real tough time. She is still helping me along the way and I must say I am looking pretty good!



When you go through the kind of Chemo I had to, not only do you lose the hair on your head but you lose your eyebrows and eyelashes. Your skin isn't happy too either. My oldest daughter did a lot of research on things to help her mom. While she was home from college during Christmas break, she signed me up for a make-up class for those going through Cancer. Because those going to the class couldn't be around the public they would not let her come in with me. I didn't want to go and be around strangers looking like I did. My daughter insisted and drove me there and sat right outside the door for 2 hours waiting so I would be brave enough to do it. (or to make sure I didn't escape) I can't thank her enough for her gift of time and love. I still am using some of the make up tricks I learned in the class. That class was done by several Estheticians who volunteered their time and talents. They and my daughter made me feel better about me.



I appreciate the time my sisters and moms put in at the Hallmark stores. I think they were competing to see who could find the best cards out there. It was a delight to walk out to the mail box to find several cards wishing me well.



Even the smallest of things were a gift to me. Shortly after my first surgery, there was a knock at the door. A friend had stopped by to visit. She noticed that there were some clean sheets sitting on the couch that I was unable to fold. She took a few moments and folded my sheets. A kind service that only took a few minutes, but brightened my day.



Several family member and friends gave of their time and did the Race for the Cure with me. The first time we did it was just 4 weeks after my major surgery, so they sweetly walked the mile with me. Since then we have done the 5K part of the Race for the Cure 5 times now. My family and friends support me and give their time to help find a cure.



My caring daughters took months to give one of her many gifts of time. They grew their hair out and cut it and donated it to Pantene's Beautiful Lengths. They make wigs for women going through cancer treatment. My oldest daughter has done it twice and my youngest daughter has donated three times and is working on her fourth.



I am thankful for the time my sisters and mother took each and everyday to call me and check in. Not a day went by that they didn't call and talk with me. They were indeed a needed long distance loving support.



To celebrate my one year of surviving, my sweet husband spent several hours digging a hole in very rocky dirt in our back yard to plant a Pink Flowering Dogwood tree that will bloom each spring to help celebrate each year of me being here. Again, a gift of time.

I am thankful for all my friends here and far away who gave of their time to help my through this tough time in my life.

I am thankful for my family, and both sets of parents who gave up so many hours on my behalf. Who traveled at a moments notice to take care of my children when I was suddenly hospitalized after my first chemo session, who sat with me at the hospital and



after Chemo, who came and helped after my surgeries. Words cannot describe my feelings of gratitude.

I am thankful to God who has given me the gift of time. I have since been able to watch my oldest daughter graduate from college, serve a mission for our church and get married. My oldest son, serve a mission for our church and graduate from college. My other son graduate from high school, run track his first year in college and is now on a mission for our church. My youngest daughter graduate from high school and start college and will be serving a mission this summer for our church. I am so happy for how my family has grown and had so many wonderful events. And in the short 5 years of surviving I have been here for them.

I am here for those special talks, making memories and just cherishing every moment we are together. I love being a Mom. I am here for the day my other children get married and to hold my new grandchild in the fall and other grandchildren someday.

Some of the many things I have learned through all of this is....Take care of yourself. Others need you as much as you need them.

Don't just ask "What can I do?" "Just go and Do it" No matter if it just takes a few moments or an hour or two. I hope that I am a better person when it comes to giving time, because I have been blessed to have TIME.

Janice Magnusson a 5 year Survivor!!! April 5, 2013

***"Early detection leads to survival"***

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