



Living life as an adventure—even with MBC

In 2012, I had a horrible cold. I was coughing terribly.

When I grabbed my chest, I felt a lump.

I looked at my wife, the love of my life, and I said, "I think I have breast cancer." We both remember that moment.

It turns out I had stage II cancer, and I had to have a mastectomy.

Four years later, I admitted to my wife, "I think my cancer is back." And I was right.

The cancer was in my spine and both lungs. The diagnosis was metastatic breast cancer (MBC).

When they did the scans, my lungs lit up like Christmas trees. There were cancer cells everywhere.

My wife said to me, "Kirby, how are we going to plan anything ever again? What are we going to do?" I said, "We're going to keep on living," and that's what we've done.

I went through 15 weeks of weekly chemo infusions combined with other drugs. I started a different oral treatment and for a few years, I was in complete remission.

Then a small tumor in my right lung grew to 0.4 cm. I switched to another treatment and, luckily, it's been stable since then.

Being a male with breast cancer, I'm a duck out of water. It's so rare, but it happens. I always refer to it as "breast cancer," not "male breast cancer." It can happen to anybody. It's not a female disease.

A lot of women only think of their daughters as being at risk for breast cancer, but they need to think about all of their children.

Because of me, my son and my grandkids have all been tested.

I definitely recommend to everyone with MBC to ask for support from their family—and tell them specifically what you want them to do, even if it means just listening. Sometimes, that's all you need.

Sometimes I have dark days but to get out of those moments, I look at the joy of living and I re-focus on that. I often look at photos of my grandchildren for inspiration, too. It's just a matter of being able to re-direct my feelings.

I guess I think of life as an adventure and I live my life like that, even now. I think about all that life has to offer and the fact that it's right in front of me. I try to grab as much from it as I can.

Having MBC hasn't stopped me from living my life, and it hasn't stopped me from making plans. In fact, I'm always making plans for the future – and they're long-term plans!

I feel like no one knows what tomorrow holds.

And all that matters is how we look forward to living life.

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