Cancer Health™

The Compassion of a Baby Spoon

The responses of support and encouragement have been overwhelming and humbling by friends inside and outside the cancerland.

December 22, 2019 By Megan-Claire Chase

Let me tell you what happened Friday. I was in such a good mood. I had taken a vacation day. I woke up with my pain level at an 8, which is tolerable. I took my time getting ready, and then put on my very favorite Christmas hat which makes me giggle. It's my current profile pic on all my social media. Ain't it pretty? I was off to my doctor appointment, and then lunch with my mother.

I thought for sure my follow-up would last maybe 15 minutes. That's what I was prepared for anyway. The original doctor who ordered the CT scan of my spine did not call to tell me I had spondylitis. Heck, I didn't even see the actual report of the results. She just sent a message in the patient portal to come see her. Naturally, I flipped out, complained and got an appointment with a different doctor within that practice but different location. It's slightly out of the way, but a nice drive when I don't have anywhere else pressing to go.

I immediately liked this new doctor because she talked me like a colleague. So, when she pulled up the report and read it out loud, I was not prepared for what it said.

I have two small sclerotic lesions on my L3 and L4 lumbar vertebral body. The report says they're likely benign but indeterminant at this point.

I have mild lumbar levoscoliosis which is a kind of scoliosis where my spine twists and curves toward the left side of my body in a C shape.

Then it said I have mild to moderate lower lumbar spondylosis with facet hypertrophy in my L5 and lower spine. Spondylosis is typically a degenerative condition of the joints of the spine and is also known as spinal osteoarthritis. The discs, joints and ligaments of the spine are generally involved.

WTF?!?! Am I 43 or 543 years old?

So, instead of being at the appointment for 15 minutes and walking out with a treatment plan, I was there two hours and walked out absolutely freaked out! As soon as this new doctor read that report and my breast cancer history, she immediately called my oncologist in the room with me. Keep in mind, I had literally seen my oncologist on Thursday and had told him about this appointment. I liked how the new doctor asked my oncologist point blank what kind of tests he is going to order for me because it should come from him. I believe she is Ukrainian, and my oncologist is Russian. I had to listen intently because both accents are thick and fast.

Now I have an MRI with and without contrast scheduled on 12/26 and will get the results at my follow-up visit with my oncologist on 12/31. Once again a vacation day will be spent at a doctor's office.

Those who think breast cancer is the "easy, free boob job type of cancer" need to be smacked. The complications and rapid aging it can cause the body leads to poor quality of life. I want so badly to apply for disability but know I cannot afford to live on pennies without insurance. Plus, I do love me some designer purses!

For those who missed my social media post about the on-call doctor who I called an asshole, you're not missing much. I was super anxious and only have two emergency Ativan. I had called to see if I could get some Ativan or Xanax to tie me over either until Monday or thru the 26th. This so-called oncologist completely lacked compassion and empathy. He refused to help or even pull up my chart, which I asked him to do. He yelled at me for yelling at him and said, "I'm THE doctor. You can't talk to me that way." Um…no boyfriend, YOU can't talk to ME that way. What an arrogant prick. After calling him an asshole and hanging up, the asshole proceeded to call back three times. I guess his fragile ego isn't used to hearing the truth from a mere patient. I did not pick up. I already had my plan B waiting in the wings.

I learned a long time ago that I cannot trust the on-call doctors to actually listen or help, but at least it's on record that I called asking for help. My friend Carla reminded me of my CBD:THC oil, so that was my plan B. It helped take the edge off so I could rest.

The responses of support and encouragement have been overwhelming and humbling by friends inside and outside the cancerland. Of course, you always have one or two cancer patients/survivors who have as much empathy and compassion as a baby spoon. My feathers get ruffled when other patients try to diagnose me. I know I'm not stage IV and pray I never will be, but when you start diagnosing me and telling me how you know everything because you are stage IV, that's when I take issue. Fortunately, I'm not close to either one of those ladies who irked me yesterday on Facebook. I said what I needed to say and done with it. I just felt it was important to mention to not ever diminish someone else's fear and anxiety without knowing their entire history or them personally.

After all, I'm only human with feelings.

This is not how I wanted to spend my last few weeks of 2019. Even if benign, the fear train is riding hard on the tracks because now I'll have to be monitored in that area. I was born with a benign tumor on my right leg as a baby. So, it's not my first time getting tumors and thinking they're benign. Then if it's cancer, well…I can't even fathom it. I'm mentally preparing myself for either outcome.

I will not allow this to my last post of 2019. I've had a lot of good and thrilling opportunities to combat the negativity and challenges experienced this year. So, expect that uplifting post this evening.

Until Next Time

Warrior Megsie

This post originally appeared on Life on the Cancer Train. It is republished with permission.
