



Please let us know of others who would like to receive this quarterly newsletter.

Editor's Note: We cannot provide medical advice. Consultation with your doctor is your best source of medical information.

Meditation Minute: Letting Go

Fran Palumbo

Take a deep breath completely relax and let the breath out.

Let everything settle.

Be totally present

In the moment, Now

Don't miss it.

The only moment is Now.

Just sense everything as it is.

Be present, aware, wakeful and relaxed.

Non doing, non judging.

Take a breath in, on the exhale "Let go of control."

With each breath, let go a little more.

Take a breath in, on the exhale "Let go of someone."

With each breath, let go a little more.

Take a breath in, on the exhale "Let go of something."

Relax. Loosen the knots.

Let it go, let it go.

Drop your body, let go of your mind, your thoughts, your personality.

Drop it all - place them outside of you in a higher awareness.

Image your house, possessions, plans, career, let go, inbreath/out-

breath.

Breath by breath, fleeting moment by fleeting moment, simply let go.

Breath in and breath out, "forgive others, past, no longer or still around."

Breath in and out, "forgive yourself."

This is wisdom working, breath by breath.

Let go of old judgments and opinions.

Be free, freedom of desirelessness.

Let go, let be - free complete, unlimited, at home, at ease.

Blessings, Fran

The Power of Empowerment

Survivors Workshop Scheduled November 19

Coming Events

Sixth Annual Celebrate Life! Fashion Show and Brunch, October 2
Shore and Country Club
East Norwalk, CT

Support/Discussion Groups
September 13, 27; October 11, 25;
November 8, 22; December 13
Fairfield County Women's Center,
Room 116, Norwalk Community
College, West Campus
5:30 p.m.

One-Day Retreat for Mothers of Breast Cancer Survivors
November 12, 2005
St. Paul's Church on the Green,
Norwalk

Empowerment Workshop for Survivors
November 19, 2005
Fairfield County Women's Center
Norwalk Community College

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Candle Lighting Ceremonies
Westport, Milford, West Hartford
October 2005

For information, (203) 857-7304,
e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com,
or see us on the web at:
www.breastcancersurvival.org.

Thanks to Novartis Oncology and the Wilton Woman's Club for generously underwriting this newsletter.

The diagnosis of a catastrophic illness such as breast cancer is a traumatic, life-changing event. Many survivors speak of their diagnosis as an "out-of-body" experience. "I sat in my doctor's office and listened to her words and I just couldn't take it all in. Who was she talking about?" Our lives spin out of control, and revolve around a new vocabulary including "sentinel node," "clean borders," "estrogen-positive or negative," "d.c.i.s. or invasive," - the list goes on and on. How can we possibly get through this? We feel completely powerless. Will our lives ever be "normal" again?

For many women, once treatment is ended, the feeling of powerless is overwhelming, and is often accompanied by profound sadness and depression which may be difficult to understand by those close to them.

The Breast Cancer Survival Center will present an all-day workshop, "The Power of Empowerment," on Saturday, November 19, from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Fairfield County Woman's Center to address these issues. Presenter will be Susanne G.

Lee of Instant Productivity, East Windsor, NJ, an empowerment coach and featured presenter at BCSC's "Our Wellness Matters" event held June 4 at Norwalk Community College.

"There are tools to help survivors take their power back," says Susanne Lee. "There is a place inside everyone where you feel energized, not victimized. For some, it may be harder to find than for others, but it is there for all of us. This place allows us to feel alive and joyful and loved, and it is a gift we can all give ourselves. Finding this place is a process, and there are skills that all of us can develop to reach it."

"The word 'empower' is defined in Webster's Dictionary as: to give official authority to, to enable. On November 19, we will learn these skills and empower ourselves to take back control of our lives, one step at a time."

Participation in this workshop is limited. A registration form is included in this newsletter, and the deadline is November 1. For further information, call 203-857-7304, or e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com.



Surgical Oncologist Dr. Barbara Ward, left, addresses BCSC's June 4 Survivors' Program, "Our Wellness Matters."



Be An Angel?

Letter from the Director

Will you be a Culinary Angel for the Breast Cancer Survival Center's sixth annual Celebrate Life! fashion show and brunch?

Celebrate Life! is our primary fundraiser of the year. We are asking supporters such as you, who believe in the importance of providing support and education for survivors, to be culinary angels for our event with a contribution of \$500.

As you may know, our all-volunteer organization is totally dependent on financial support from donors such as you.

This year we need your help more than ever before, as the demands for expansion of our program continue.

In November 2005 we will present a day-long retreat for mothers of breast cancer survivors, in response to pleas

from moms who have been unable to find such support elsewhere. Additionally, we will host our first Empowerment Day for survivors, to provide necessary tools for survivors to regain control of their lives after the trauma of diagnosis and treatment.

The Breast Cancer Survival Center is very grateful for your past contributions. BCSC is the only non-profit direct-service organization in the state of Connecticut, and one of only a handful in the country, exclusively devoted to providing post-treatment education and support for breast cancer survivors and their families.

Your \$500 donation is completely tax-deductible, and will help cover our costs for this event. All culinary angels will be acknowledged prominently in our program and publicity. Thank you for your kindness and generosity. We can't do it without you!

Susan Santangelo

Yes, I want to be an angel.

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please make check to Breast Cancer Survival Center and mail to:

Susan Santangelo, BCSC, 4 Drummers Trail, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

For information, (203) 857-7304, e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com

Save the Dates

October 2
**Sixth Annual Celebrate Life!
Fashion Show and Brunch**
The Shore and Country Club

November 19
**Empowerment Workshop for
Survivors**
Norwalk Community College



Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education for Breast Cancer Survivors and their Families

Carla Gisolfi Local Hero

Honored by Komen Foundation

Carla Gisolfi of Norwalk, a founder of the Breast Cancer Survival Center, was honored as a Local Hero by the Susan G. Komen Foundation, as part of BMW's Ultimate Drive at BMW of Darien. BCSC board member Sara Brown read a tribute to Carla, written by niece Elissa:

"All of my life I have heard about the c-word. It is a disease that my mom, grandfather, grandmother, my other grandfather, and my aunt Carla have had/have. You could call my aunt my second mother, but I think of her as my angel on earth. My aunt Carla is amazing. She has had breast cancer since I was little, and has been fighting it ever since. So I know right now you are thinking, this woman is amazing; well she is. She lives her life to the fullest always hoping for a tomorrow; and you know what, she always gets

one. Yeah, there are days that she wishes weren't there, but she gets through them. She is such a positive person, which is why she can enjoy her life. I love her so much and she means so much to me. I truly respect her and I idolize her. She is my hero. I thank God every day for keeping her on earth and giving her the strength to live her life, because she deserves it."



Carla Gisolfi, left, with Sara Brown.

Sixth Annual Fashion Show

October 2, 2005

The Breast Cancer Survival Center

Cordially Invites You to Attend
Celebrate Life!

Brunch and Fashion Show

Superstar Models: Survivors of Breast Cancer

Fashions: Talbots in Westport

Sunday, October 2, 2005
11:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The Shore and Country Club
220 Gregory Boulevard
East Norwalk, Connecticut

Corporate Table: \$500
Individual Tickets: \$50

R.S.V.P. by September 21, 2005
Please use the enclosed response card

The Breast Cancer Survival Center is a Non-Profit Organization
Providing Post-Treatment Support and Education
for Breast Cancer Survivors and Their Families.

Celebrate Life!

Brunch and Fashion Show, October 2, 2005

- Please make _____ reservation(s) at \$50 per person.
 - Corporate table of eight at \$500 per table (include company in program).
 - I can't attend, but enclose a contribution to help breast cancer survivors.
- I am attending in honor of _____

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone/e-mail

Please make checks payable to Breast Cancer Survival Center and mail to:
Susan Santangelo, BCSC, 4 Drummers Trail, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.
All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.
For further information, please call (203) 857-7304.

Raffle Prizes Wanted

The Breast Cancer Survival Center will hold its sixth annual *Celebrate Life!* fashion show and brunch, featuring superstar models who have survived cancer, on Sunday, October 2, 2005, at Shore and Country Club, East Norwalk CT. An invitation to this very special event is included at left.

This is our primary fundraiser of the year, and all money raised through this event goes directly to support our programs. Raffle prizes are needed. All donations are completely tax-deductible. For more information on how to donate to the raffle, call us at 203-857-7304, or e-mail us at cancer-survival@aol.com. Thanks!

Scenes from Last Year's Event



Event Registration Form

I Wish It Had Happened To Me!

A One-day Retreat for Mothers of Breast Cancer Survivors

Supportive Discussions * Music * Walking Meditation

November 12, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

St. Paul's on the Green, Norwalk, CT

\$35 per person (incl. continental breakfast and lunch)

Please register and enclose payment by Oct. 30, 2005.

The Power of Empowerment

Taking Back My Life After Cancer

A One-day Workshop for Post-treatment Survivors

Presenter: Susanne G. Lee, Professional Empowerment Coach, Instant Productivity, Inc.

November 19, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Fairfield County Women's Center

Room 116, West Campus

Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, CT

\$35 per person (incl. continental breakfast and lunch)

Please register and enclose payment by November 7, 2005

Registration is very limited. Sign up now!

Please mail completed registration form and check, payable to

BCSC, 4 Drummers Trail, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

Please check: () Mothers Retreat \$35 () Empowerment Workshop \$35

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: Day _____

Evening _____

E-mail _____

Questions: (203) 857-7304. E-mail: cancersurvival@aol.com

Breast Cancer In the News

"New Treatment Gains Ground Against An Aggressive Breast Cancer." Almost overnight, one of the worst forms of breast cancer has become potentially one of the most curable. In recent weeks, the standard treatment has changed for women diagnosed with HER2-positive breast cancer, an aggressive form of breast cancer that often recurs soon after chemotherapy. The drug Herceptin, which has been approved only for women with advanced disease, is now being used to treat women with early stage HER2 cancer. The change follows a May report that early Herceptin use lowered the risk of the cancer coming back by 52%—one of the largest gains ever in the battle against breast cancer. *Wall Street Journal*, July 12, 2005

"Study: Diet Can Help Fight Breast Cancer" A low-fat diet can cut the risk of breast cancer returning by more than 40 percent in patients with a form of cancer that is not sensitive to the hormone estrogen....Those patients account for a third of all breast cancer patients. The other two-thirds—those whose tumor growth is stimulated by estrogen—had a 15 percent reduction in risk....The finding that the diet most benefits women whose cancers were not sensitive to estrogen was especially encouraging because they now have no other way to reduce the risk of a recurrence. Women whose cancers are sensitive can take estrogen-blocking drugs like Tamoxifen, which lowers their risk by about the same 40 percent. *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 2005

"High-Tech Clothing Helps East Hot Flashes" New lines of sleepwear, leisurewear and underwear, made of high-tech fabrics designed to help minimize nocturnal fluctuations and 'night sweats' are targeted to baby boomer women going through that change of life. *Hartford Courant*, June 8, 2005.

A Mother's Story

Carol L. Frank

Susan asked me to do a real difficult assignment for this newsletter. Here is my attempt to share our lives for the past seven years and feelings with those women who have adult daughters that have or had breast cancer.

Our daughter Lisa is a two-time breast cancer survivor.

Our journey began in September 1998 when Lisa was first diagnosed at age 36. She underwent a lumpectomy, followed by chemo, radiation and five years of Tamoxifen. During this period, family and dear friends helped to get us through this nightmare and roller coaster of emotions.

In 1998 and the following 5+ years there were no support groups for mothers with adult daughters with breast cancer. All the hospitals and support groups thought there was a need, but no one stepped up to the plate.

Two weeks short of six years and only a few pills of Tomoxifen left we were to start again, again the left breast but this time some positive nodes. This was followed by a double mastectomy, chemo, radiation and on July 12 of this year a prophylactic total hysterectomy.

Lisa, through it all, was and is a great inspiration to her family and all her friends, both survivors and non-survivors, and in many ways handled it far better than we did.

After all of this, there was still no place for us to go—we mothers with adult

daughters. Typically Susan listened to my cry for help and this November 12th we will have our first retreat here in Norwalk for mothers of adult daughters with breast cancer. I urge all of you to attend; we all need to support this group that is here for us.

Even though your friends are there for you, in the dark of the night when your thoughts take over, you need something else to help deal with your anger, ongoing fear of every ache and pain, your roller coaster of emotions and always that question of, "Why her?"

You learn through all experiences, good and bad, that you have to be grateful for the important things in life. The sun shining when you awake in the morning, your daughter's capacity to smile and live her life through all of this and "not to let it beat her." Your fabulous friends, the greatest husband, father and son that anyone could have.

Lisa is blessed with a wonderful job, great boss and a terrific guy named Steve who has been at her side through thick and thin and has helped her and us get through so much of our journey.

We hope and pray that our journey has come to an end with this last surgery, but if not we will be together as a stronger family to help each other weather through this ordeal, and we will win it because we have no other choice.

Our New Look

Thanks to a generous donation from Novartis Oncology, makers of the breast cancer preventative drug, Femara, we have completely redesigned our quarterly newsletter. We are including regular features on exercise and nutrition, as well as stories from survivors which are sure to inspire. If you would like to see any subjects included, please e-mail us at cancersurvival@aol.com.

We are grateful to Novartis and to the Wilton Woman's Club, which continues to support this publication for the fifth year.

Mother's Retreat

November 12

The Breast Cancer Survival Center will sponsor a one-day retreat for mothers of survivors:

"I Wish It Had Happened to Me!"

Saturday, November 12

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

St. Paul's Church on the Green, Norwalk CT.

A registration form is included in this newsletter. For further information, call 203-857-7304, or e-mail cancersurvival@aol.com.

Dr. Brett Carr To Address Survivors

Sept. 27 Special Speaker
on Integrative Medical
Approach

Dr. Brett Carr, chiropractor and nutritionist, will discuss "An Integrative Medical Approach Following Breast Cancer--A Guide to Survival," as the first in our fall special speakers' series.

The meeting will take place on September 27, 5:30 p.m. at the Fairfield County Women's Center, Room 116, West Campus, Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, CT. Admission is free, but registration is required.

Dr. Carr graduated from the University of Bridgeport College of Chiropractic and continued to earn a Masters of Science in Clinical Nutrition from the University of Bridgeport Nutrition Institute. He also completed post-graduate classes in nutrition, detoxification, weight control, rehabilitation and sports. He is presently an Assistant Professor of Clinical Sciences at the University of Bridgeport College of Chiropractic, and a Basic Sciences Instructor at the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy.

Young Survivor's Experience

Cindy Perham

My Diagnosis

At 32, the last thing I expected to hear from the Ob-Gyn at my annual physical was, "I feel something here in your right breast. Although it may just be dense tissue let's have you get that checked out with a mammogram today. We'll also have them do an ultrasound at the same time."

I called my husband, Keith, and we meet at Fairfield Beach for a quiet talk about how everything was going to be all right. I told him to go back to work and that I would call him later. (Super Cindy didn't need anyone!) I had the mammogram and ultrasound and made my way home. I made small talk with one of the technicians there and I felt no comfort at all. When I arrived home there was already a phone message from my Ob-Gyn's office saying to call them as soon as possible. The film taken of my breast had already been looked at by my doctor, and I will never forget the way he described the growth as having "fingers growing off of it," and also the next thing he said was, "no biopsy necessary...whatever this is, it needs to come out." A week later I was at the out patient surgery area of Bridgeport Hospital. My surgeon had completed the lumpectomy and was visiting me in the recovery area. He told me that the tumor was "hard." I obviously didn't understand at the time that when the tumor was hard, there is a good chance of it being cancer. Coming out of the anesthesia, I mistook his comment for the degree of difficulty of the procedure.

My Treatment and Beyond

The following week I meet with the surgeon in his office and he told my husband to come over and hold my hand. He explained to me with perfect bedside manners that I had breast cancer. My husband clenched his lips to hold back his emotion. I immediately used humor to change the mood, as I have always been known to do. My first words were, "you know we can't tell my mother." I had always felt the need to protect others about my diagnosis. That need is one of the biggest eye openers about myself that came out of all this. I went straight to Mom and Dad's house and since my mother was out I told my father that "there was something growing in my breast and that I would need another procedure to get it all out." I could not even say the word cancer. My daughter, Amanda, two at the time, was in day care throughout most of these chaotic days. The next person to know of my cancer was her daycare provider. I broke down when telling her. I was scared for Amanda more than anyone. She was still in diapers and so unknowing of what was happening to her seemingly safe family life. Next stop, tell the close neighbors, the boss, but keep it to a bare minimum. I didn't want anyone outside my small circle to know. Many of my extended family found out years later or have never known. This is a form of

isolation that I put myself in. Would I have done this if another young survivor told me that it's ok to talk about? I feel like I can finally be free telling my story now.

A week later I met my oncologist. In my head I was thinking that I would talk with him once and he would tell me to have radiation and move on with my life as normal. This was not his advice. Because the tumor was over a centimeter and because of my age, a more aggressive treatment would be recommended. I would have somewhere between 4 and 8 treatments of chemotherapy. I pulled every hair out of my husband's knee as I squeezed it upon hearing this news. I am glad he was there that day. I got a second opinion from a young woman doctor at Yale. I asked her to tell me what she would do if it were her. She told me to have 4 treatments of a chemo that would be more toxic, but assured me that by body would probably recover from it. This would be followed up with the standard seven weeks of radiation. That ended up being good advice. The chemo and radiation was given and followed up with the five years of tamoxifen. One thing that stuck in my head was the fact that my husband I and I were going to try to have a second child the very same month I started chemotherapy. My breast cancer diagnosis didn't just alter that month's plans; it altered me and my family's entire life. Our options had been taken away with regard to the size of our family and the course of our lives. I wanted my daughter to have other siblings to share her life with. Only 6 years later now, do I realize that my life was altered by breast cancer but also enhanced in many ways.

Issues for the Rest of My Life

If I didn't meet the many beautiful women in my weekly support group or the fabulous group at the Breast Cancer Survival Center, I might not have known the support you can feel from the strong woman faced with this diagnosis. Our stories are all different, but we have a tremendously strong common bond. We had breast cancer and we are doing everything in our powers to have a healthy and happy life. But the young survivor has unique needs to their age group. My thoughts were complicated - Will I see my daughter grow up? Will my husband's life change in ways he was not expecting? How will all of this affect intimacy issues? How will this affect my job/career? I didn't think my friends understood. They all seemed so happy having that second or third child, and talking about going to the hair salon for a highlight next week. I had a wig (beautiful Singaporean hair, I might add!) and I now cherished every moment with my family - especially Amanda who I would watch sleeping at night...just because I could. I worry about recurrence, but I don't dwell on it. I truly do get up every day since I have been healthy and I think about how to make each day unforgettable. This is the greatest lesson I learned from breast cancer.

Reflections after 17 Years

Sheryl Kraft

A good friend called me the other day to tell me about her 34-year old niece, who had just received the news of a diagnosis.

"Maybe you can talk to her," my friend said, "and give her hope." She continued. "After all, it's been a long time for you -how long again?"

My answer did not come quickly. I paused, and counted from the year of my diagnosis, when I, too, was 34. I was surprised to hear myself say, "Almost seventeen years."

Time seems to stand still in a crisis, and for a good portion of the time following the initial shock of a diagnosis. I can still recall everything about that day back in December 1988 when I found out I had cancer: what I was wearing, exactly where I was sitting, the feel of those words against my skin, the look of anguish on my husband's face, and the fear that I'd never get to see my children grow up.

My surgeries, first, a mastectomy, then later, reconstruction, and my treatment, first chemo and then Tamoxifen, seemed to define my days and con-

sume my energy. Each day I woke with cancer on my mind and each night I fell into bed, anxious to escape from the reality of my days, praying for sleep.

Like climbing a mountain, each step further away from the base toward the summit brings us closer to a time when we may face each day with a little less fear than the day before. I do almost everything in my power to insure my good health. I exercise regularly, eat healthy, well-balanced meals and try to keep my stress to a manageable level. When negative thoughts overwhelm me, I push them away, and put positive ones in their place. It takes a lot of effort, a great amount of willpower, but it's worth it! I make an attempt to plan future events, like trips, family gatherings, nights out with old friends. I surround myself with people I love and strive to remember where I sat almost seventeen years ago, and where I sit today.

"Sure," I tell my friend, "tell your niece to call me. I think I can help. After all, I've learned a lot in these seventeen years."

Recipe for Good Health

American Institute for Cancer Research: Halibut Tomato Herb Sauce

1 lb. halibut fillet	2 Tbsp. finely chopped scallions
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice	1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil	1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp. dried crushed rosemary	1/2 tsp. grated orange rind
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste	A pinch of cayenne pepper, if desired
1/2 cup diced tomatoes	Fresh rosemary for garnish, if desired
1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil	

Place the halibut in a large, shallow dish. In a small bowl, mix together the lemon juice, oil and rosemary for the marinade. Season it with salt and pepper to taste. Pour the marinade over the fish, turning to coat both sides. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 4 hours. (Marinating gives great flavor but also helps protect animal protein from forming cancer-causing substances on the grill.) Drain the fish and discard the marinade. Place the fish on a greased grill 4 inches from the heat source and cook, turning once, until opaque throughout, about 10 minutes per inch of thickness. While the fish is cooking you can prepare the sauce. In a small bowl, mix together the tomatoes, basil, scallions, vinegar, 1 tsp. of oil, orange rind and a pinch of cayenne pepper, if desired. Whisk until it is well blended. Season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste. Heat the sauce on low heat until warm. Place the grilled fish on a large serving platter. Garnish with some chopped fresh rosemary, if desired, and spoon the sauce over the top. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 174 calories, 7 g. total fat (1 g. saturated fat), 2 g. carbohydrate, 24 g. protein, less than 1 g. dietary fiber, 64 mg. sodium.

Breast Cancer in the News

"Cancer Drugs Help Prevent Relapses and Prolong Lives." New drugs developed using the tools of biotechnology are helping to prevent relapses among cancer patients and prolonging lives, cancer specialists said Friday at the opening of the biggest annual conference devoted to treatment of the disease. Much of the attention at this year's meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology is directed at "targeted therapies," which take aim at the underlying molecular mechanisms that prompt tumor growth. Those drugs have been a focus at previous conferences, but the evidence for their effectiveness is mounting, and experts are predicting that many cancer patients, if not most, will eventually receive at least one such drug. *The New York Times*, May 13, 2005

"Study: Exercise Is Breast Cancer Weapon." Being physically active boosts the odds that breast cancer patients will survive the disease according to the first study to produce evidence that exercise improves prospects of beating any malignancy. The findings, from a large, well-respected study of U.S. nurses, found that breast cancer patients who walk or do other kinds of moderate exercise for three to five hours a week are about 50 percent less likely to die from the disease than sedentary women. The findings add strong new support to the growing body of evidence that healthy lifestyle factors such as eating well and exercising regularly provide significant health benefits, possibly even offering protection against cancer recurrences about on a par with chemotherapy and even the newer hormonal and drug treatments....The researchers who conducted the study said the findings indicate breast cancer patients should try to exercise regularly after undergoing standard care to maximize their chances of surviving. *Hartford Courant*, May 25, 2005