

# My Cancer Journey: *Kathie Pagano-Fuller*



## **April 14, 2017**

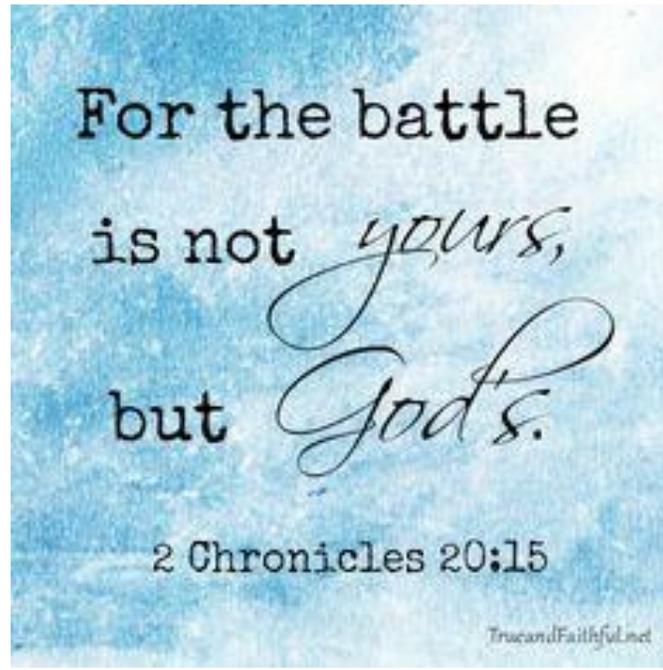
"I had not been feeling well for the last couple of months & couldn't figure out what was wrong. A few weeks ago, with a temperature of 104, I went to the E.R. After a CT scan of my torso, they discovered many lymph nodes were enlarged. The next week I underwent many tests & was diagnosed by my Hematologist-Oncologist with **Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (Stage 4)**. This diagnosis also includes cancer cells in my **Bone Marrow**. He is known as the best doctor in our area in this field. I started my aggressive chemotherapy treatment on April 12th. The plan now is 6-8 treatments every 3 weeks which should take me through August. He will monitor the lymph nodes & re-adjust the interventions as needed." There is no "cure;" the plan/hope is to get me to the "remission" state and keep me on medications while I am monitored.

## **My Response**

I was relieved to know that something was truly not "right"- and I was not becoming a hypochondriac! I was also pleased to learn that we were led to an incredibly knowledgeable & respected Oncologist in the state, Dr. Larry Schlabach. I was also confident that I could face this newest "challenge" (as I have with personal & professional challenges I have faced in the past) with the continuous support & care giving of my wonderful husband & teammate, Ron, the support of family & friends -close by and far away. But, most of all, I knew that my spiritual life would deepen as a result of the new "journey" that had been given to me. As most of you know, I have had a strong faith in God since I was a child. I have received many blessings in my life, but I must admit I have grown the most from the *challenges*. What could I learn and pass on to others from this new challenge? I asked myself. So, I called upon the Holy Spirit to guide me through daily and I would learn- one day at a time. Not "Kathie's Plans" - but God's plans for me! God's got this one!

***"I know the plans I have for you....plans to give you a hope,  
and a future." ~ Jeremiah 29:11***

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**May 28, 2017**

My doctor said the lymph nodes have drastically reduced in size and my hemoglobin numbers look good. That bodes well for a reduction in the bone marrow cancer cells. He is eager to see the results of the June 9th PET Scan to get confirmation of these promising results. We are too!! We know that God is by our side every step of the way on this unknown journey. And with the support of our devoted family and close friends, the destination will be a joyous one!

*"For all things work together for good, for those who are called to His purposes" ~Romans 8:28*

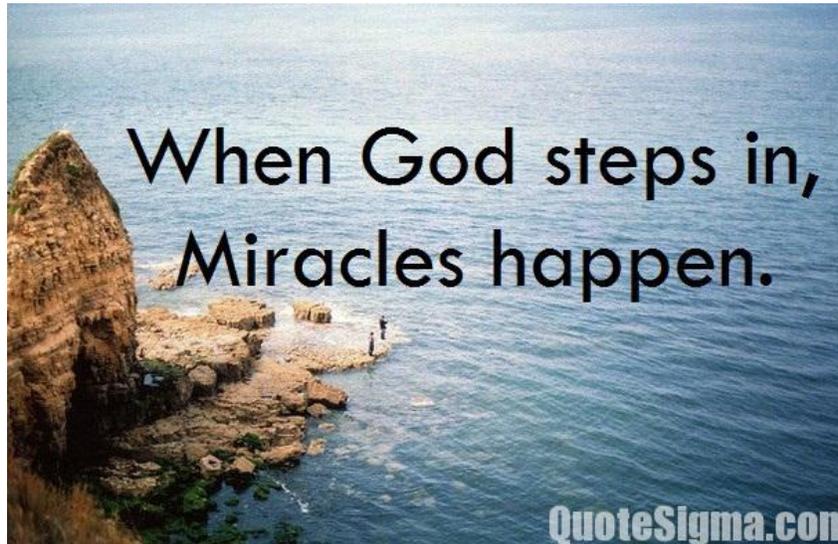
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**July 2, 2017**

**Friday, June 9th:** {Daughter Rachel was visiting from Buffalo; Daughter Kelly lives in town near us.} Had a PET Scan in the morning. 6:30 pm: call from Oncologist stating a BLOOD CLOT had been seen by the radiologist (a blessing to be found as it is rare to find via a PET Scan) & I needed to get to the ER immediately before it broke off & reached my lungs. My thoughts: Bummer! Our lasagna dinner had to be put on hold! :o( My husband & daughter were more concerned than I was! The hospital staff admitted me & eventually found 2 blood clots & put me on Eliquis for several months to help them disintegrate.

*"Anything is possible if a person believes."  
~ Jesus's words in Mark 9:3*

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**Wed., June 14, 2017**

**{Doctor visit and #4 Chemotherapy Treatment}**

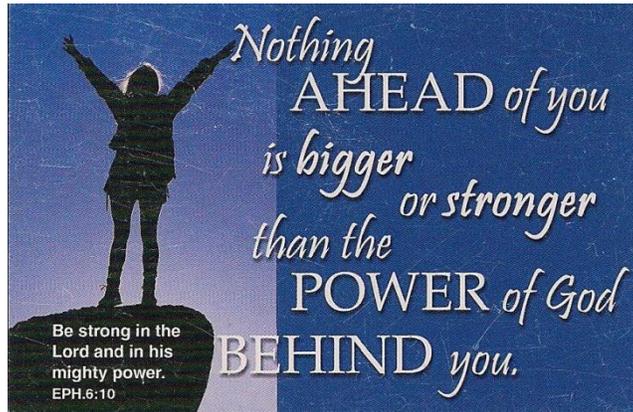
**Dr. Schlabach is confident the blood clots are under control with the Eliquis. He was eager to show us the PET Scan results. The first PET Scan results showed most of my lymph nodes were enlarged. I was "*lit up like a Christmas tree!*" This 2nd scan showed that only one lymph node was enlarged (near the blood clots), and that there was not any trace of bone marrow cancer cells! The doctor stated that I am already in **REMISSION!** We were stunned!**

### **My Response**

**Obviously, the "chemo cocktail" has been the right one to combat all of my cancer cells. But there was much more to it than that. Dr. Schlabach said my "body was riddled with cancer in my spine, ribs, and pelvis." To be in remission this soon after a Stage 4 diagnosis is truly **MIRACULOUS!** Ron and I attribute this healing to being led to the right medical team, all the intercessory prayers that are being offered daily for my healing from family & friends around the country, and the power of our awesome God! We are humbly grateful for this positive turn of events. We know that the rough road is not over as I have 2 more chemo treatments which usually lead to a week+ of "unwell" feelings. The pain will continue as my bones heal. By the end of August, I hope to be able to walk again and begin to build up my muscle strength. I am truly grateful for being given the opportunity to "walk into the future" - with an eagerness to serve God in the months & years I have left on this earth. I pray this next plan for my life will be revealed to me in the coming weeks. Alleluia! Praise God forevermore!!**

***"...By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope...  
May He be given glory forever and ever." ~ Ephesians 3:20***

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## September, 2017

Over the past 5 months I have completed my 6 courses of aggressive chemotherapy. The “chemo cocktails” were not pleasant, but endurable. Food no longer tasted good – how could brownies and ice cream *not* taste good?! Much harder was to be restricted to a recliner 24/7 and not be “myself” – a high energy, active person. I was not able to: dash around the house completing many tasks on my “to do” list, joyously work & pray in my flower gardens, or drive around town to meet with colleagues and friends. I asked **God**, what am I to do? He answered clearly,

***“Trust me, Kathie. I’ve got this. You don’t need to DO anything.  
Just be prayerful and be grateful.”***

And, so, I rested as my body urged, and surrounded myself with scripture devotions and positive readings, uplifting music (e.g., Mandisa, Point of Grace, Women of Faith), and thought of ways to reach out to others. As much as I tried to communicate with others via email, cards, and phone, I found my former colleagues and friends, new and old, were the ones reaching out to me in so many ways. Visits, food, cards, gifts, emails, and texts continued for all of the months I was laid up. Friends from church not only prayed for me, but laid hands on me, anointed me with oil, and prayed daily for my healing. All of these things have helped me survive and continue to heal. I am grateful to God every day for the blessings this “cancer journey” is providing me!

In this second “phase,” I have started physical therapy to help my muscles and bones regain strength. Although my cancer is in remission, I must receive ongoing treatment via an infusion of the drug, Rituxan, every 2 months for at least 2 years. There is no “cure” at this time. Yet...I am truly blessed to have new days of LIFE – which I will never take for granted. I know I owe my healing to our Almighty God and feel even closer to Him than ever before. I feel that because my life has been spared at this time, I must do more to make the world a better place. Yes, I am still a “doer” as well as a “believer.” I am praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to now lead me to the tasks, people or projects that will best utilize my gifts and talents – doing all for His glory until the day I am called to my final “home.”

Thank you, dear family and friends. I wish you as many blessings as I am receiving each day.  
You, too, are loved - by me and our God!

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