

# **It was Real**

by Cathy Doser 3/21/2019

I didn't expect it.

I thought I had the Flu. Bad Flu. The Worst Flu I Have Ever Had, through the weekend of March 6-7, 2010.

And so I thought I could work One More Day.

And I almost Died. Yes, you read that Right!

But I didn't feel better. And so, that Monday afternoon, I asked for a next day's appointment at my Primary Care Physician, and got one. I slept that evening, uneasily.

I went in the next morning. And I told the fill-in Doctor for my Regular Doctor that I was feeling unusually tired. More Tired than I had ever felt in my life. And He examined me, and couldn't find anything wrong, externally. And so he ordered tests, including a Complete Blood Count, to try to find out why I was so Tired, why my Body was seemingly not bringing enough Oxygen to it, as it should.

And I think, in his complete examination, and his hypothesis of what could be wrong, that he considered that I wasn't properly oxygenating, and that I might have Pneumonia, or a Lung Tumor, and the way he could see that, was first, an X-Ray. And that didn't seem to find anything. And the next thing was a PET Scan (positron emission tomography). But at the Burien Clinic of Group Health, they didn't have that expensive machine, and he asked me to drive up to the Bellevue Hospital, where they had the new, expensive equipment, and had a PET Scanner.

The only thing is, if he had taken the time to see what the result of my CBC was, he would have never had me drive my Van the 19 miles to Bellevue, and sent me by Ambulance. As I later found out, my CBC had my White Blood Count was Low, my Red Blood Count was Low, my Hematocrit Count as Extra Low, my Platelet Count as Extra Low. As I've been told, people were amazed I could even stand up!

As I was brought out of the PET Scanner, the Tech told me they had to immediately get me over to the Emergency Room, because the tests had told them that I was several units low of Blood. Oh, and by the way, they had also found out that I had Leukemia. Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). That is not the way you should be told you have Cancer!

As I would later find out, especially through my Younger Sister's deep, online study of ALL, it was a serious diagnosis. She is employed in the Medical Field, so her information was very convincing! Later, the further study of ALL, told me that of my type of ALL, about 8 or 9 out of 10 adults achieve remission after treatments, but many relapse, which lowers the overall cure rate to 30% to 40%. That was very worrying, because they had no idea Why I had gotten the ALL. So, they first took a hip Bone Marrow sample, to confirm that I had ALL. And since that did confirm the ALL, they tested my two sisters for Bone Marrow Match, in case they decided to go that way, for treatment.

But my Oncologist decided that they would go the standard ChemoTherapy track, and give me what is called Hyper-CVAD Chemo (again, the acronym is because CVAD is very long to recite, *\*'CVAD' is the acronym of the drugs used in course A: Cyclophosphamide, Vincristine, Doxorubicin (also known by its trade name, Adriamycin), and Dexamethasone, Course B consists of Methotrexate and Cytrabine.\**)

I was hospitalized for my infusion of the Chemo, since it is so affecting. But, it didn't seem to be working, so my Oncologist stopped it. I was told, by my Oncologist, that nothing could be done for me, since I was too weak for the Bone Marrow Transplant. So, he told me that they were going to send me to Bailey-Bouchet House, for Hospice Care, and that I was probably going to Die, in about 5 weeks.

That was the second time I had, basically been told, that I was about to Die. The First time was when the Tech told me that I had Leukemia, but it was *implied* then. This was the second time.

I don't know if you've been told something that serious before, but that was the First, and Second time for me.

And it was shocking.

It was Real.

And I didn't even want to cry then, I was so shocked.

But that Oncologist was wrong. In that same year, I had a Spontaneous Remission. They don't know why I had that. And, as I sit here and write this, 9 Years Later, luckily, I can say that he was wrong. I have even outlived the Recurrence rate of the return of ALL of 5 years being diagnosed, and suffering through it.

I'm happy to be alive. But, since they don't know why the Spontaneous Remission happened, if I did have recurrence, I was going to Die. I am now lucky that they have found another treatment that works, and that is Immunotherapy. That's where your own Immune System is treated to fight the Cancer, which it hasn't been able to do before. I didn't have that, when I got better. And so I lived under the constant fear of Recurrence.

But, when I was told, that I was going to Die,

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