

Greenwich Sentinel

Building a Strong Community Together + October 7, 2016

Sixteen Years After My Breast Cancer Diagnosis, and...



By Julia Chiappetta
Sentinel Health Columnist

Prevention is still the key. I recall with precision the day I heard those dreadful words, “You have Stage IIB Infiltrating Ductal Carcinoma. It’s aggressive and you need to do something right now.”

The sun was shining on my face through the wall of glass doors in my condo in Cos Cob, as I dropped to my knees crying out to Jesus to bring me the peace and confidence I needed to make the right decisions for the journey that lay ahead and the eventual surrender, which included purging toxins from my body, mind and spirit, in ways that went far beyond breast cancer. It was a humbling, shocking and exciting time, as I became an active participant in my quest for wellness.

As a practice each October, I purposely steer away from anything pink. My heart is otherwise focused on real people who are desperate for help, and I therefore feel these pink trinkets and buying options are taking that focus away from the real needs. As I experience the invasion of fundraising events, runs, walks and galas, I ponder how powerful it would be if only we could corral all of this energy and funding to change the trend in the way we do fundraising to provide education, encouragement and short-term financial support to those crying out for help right now.

Back to prevention and its importance. Had I been able to write a letter to my younger self, it might have gone something like this:

Dear Julia,

You are wonderfully and beautifully made by God. Always cherish your body as a precious gift and use it wisely to enjoy physical activity, hard work, helping others and loving deeply.

Don’t forget to spend time in your grandmother’s garden, finding solace lying in the grass, staring at the sky. Here you will find the foundation of life; good nutrition from the composted organic soil.

Remember... avoid anything in packages, all processed foods, and white foods like flour, rice or sugar.

Get a good night’s sleep, because only when you are sleeping or not digesting can your cells heal, and you will have more energy the next day.

Wonderfully prepared meals from scratch are the best, and a special time to enjoy family and friends. Don’t rush through them, and be sure to include organic fruits and vegetables daily.

Keep playing your guitar and cello, because music sings to your soul.

Don’t forget that nutrition chart in Miss Hotchkiss’ sixth grade class at Cos Cob School, where you learned that your body was designed to operate optimally on whole and not processed foods, which means avoid stuff like soft drinks and French fries.

Eating smart will become more important to you because companies like Monsanto will start spraying cancer-causing pesticides on fruits and vegetables and begin to grow genetically modified foods which are not safe, especially to kids.

It will come to pass that the soil, so rich now, will become depleted, yielding crops with fewer nutrients.

Don’t forget one of your favorite

quotes from author and Founding Father of the United States Benjamin Franklin: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This will stand true all the days of your life.

Mammography is only 50 to 60 percent accurate, picking up mostly slow growing cancers, and the radiation from the test is actually a risk factor for breast cancer. Because of this you should seek ultrasound, thermography or MRI screenings for a more comprehensive view.

Breast cancer is not a respecter of age, so learn about self-examination on your 18th birthday... it may save your life one day and help you learn to feel the difference between the normal lumps and bumps in your breasts and those that might be foreign or abnormal.

Eighty-five of all breast cancers are not hereditary; they are caused by environmental factors such as dirty air and water, food lacking nutrients, stress, lack of exercise and sleep.

Bottled water will be something you will hear about, but don’t drink from plastic bottles; instead, purchase an alkaline, ionized water unit for your sink and only drink from glass, like you do now.

Microwave ovens will come on the scene, but please don’t use one to heat or cook your food.

Avoid toxic cosmetics and personal care products including tampons. Read labels to understand what you are putting on your face and body. Many of the ingredients may alter your hormone activity, which increases your risk for breast cancer.

Keep active; continue to play sports, run, hike and bike to bring on a good sweat while being conscious of your weight, because even ten pounds taxes your adrenal glands, thyroid, heart and liver.

Don’t smoke, and limit your alcohol intake because smoking and drinking will put you at a higher risk for breast cancer and

heart disease.

Think twice about birth control pills because they increase your risk for breast and other cancers.

You don’t know what a cell phone is yet, but once you do, please don’t keep it on or near your head or body.

Sincerely,

Your older (and hopefully wiser) self

Some closing thoughts and tips...

According to The American Institute for Cancer Research, at least 33 percent of breast cancer is preventable by making better diet choices. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports, “Education to individuals, communities and countries to make better diet and lifestyle choices could reduce cancer globally by 30 percent.” These are huge numbers and therefore education is needed.

Scrutinize every single thing you put on your body. For some good information visit The Environmental Working Group’s Skin Deep database. Locally, The Greenwich Pharmacy has some nice options for toxic free make-up (see Maria).

Eat organic as much as possible and eliminate junk food.

For good abstracts, science and health tips, visit: [www. AnnieAppleseedProject.org](http://www.AnnieAppleseedProject.org).

As always, be good to your body, mind and soul. You are precious and valuable, deserving of all good things. Please try to be positive, never be afraid to question and always do your own research as this will empower you and enhance all aspects of your life.

Julia Chiappetta is the author of “Breast Cancer: The Notebook” (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting. She lives in Cos Cob.

Julia Chiappetta is the author of “Breast Cancer: The Notebook” (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting. She lives in Cos Cob.