

The days when I am not busy cleaning or writing my mind seems to snap back to the reality that my little girl, Tina, is gone. She died!

At one time I couldn't seem to comprehend that word and my little girl in the same sentence. All the reading to make sure I understood what would lay ahead for her just brings it home to sit in my mind like a vulture and conjure up the idea without her. Her, she, my beautiful child who was so full of loving and caring for other people, is gone. My God, the pain in my breast is like anvil, and I am waiting for it to lift. My eyes burn from the crying. My mind reels at the memories of what she went through; four years of chemotherapy, a mastectomy, radiation, more chemotherapy, and then she was gone. There was so much more that could have been done, but at the time, just two years ago, science was not at the point it is today. Now there are treatments that could have prolonged her life, and yes...managed her Inflammatory Breast Cancer, instead of the ultimate sacrifice of her short 40 years on this earth.

I find my self staring at the pictures of young women on the internet that have poured their stories out in hopes it might help someone else understand this awful disease. These women, and some men, have come together through the Internet and met and consoled and learned from each other.

These people come from the United States, France, Germany, Denmark, England, Australia and yes, New Zealand There is no trade zone barrier to abide by when we are all talking about one thing. Inflammatory Breast Cancer, and they all say the same thing, "why did I not know about this form of breast cancer a long time ago". We all pretty much say the same thing. Why Were We Not Armed With Knowledge Before Now?

We have a Doctor in the family that actually understands this form of cancer. He has been gentle and kind in his words to me, but honest at the same time. "When young women in their childbearing years get Inflammatory breast cancer, the prognosis is not good. Because they are active and young, their system moves the dreaded cancer cells through their bodies at an accelerated rate and their strength is taxed incredibly soon. Older people don't have such active hormones to move the disease so fast, and have a better chance the chemotherapy can stop the disease in its tracks."

My 37-year-old daughter had made up her mind that IBC was not going to change her life. She continued to work, and do the things she always had done. In the beginning, when she was first diagnosed at stage 4 (because the cancer had already metastasized to her liver) "Mom, these drugs are either going to kill this thing, or I am going to die. That is the reality of it all." With her chin in the air, a smile on her face and a determination I had never seen, my baby girl conjured up all the will, anger and stubbornness to keep going forward with the knowledge that the drugs would kill these obscene little marauders and she could come out of the turmoil cancer free.

One day I put my arms around her and stroked her very thick short hair. I remember thinking, soon it would be gone, that hair she had always hated. That hair that always had a mind of it's own. "I bought a blonde wig Mom", she said. "I'm ready to be bald, that doesn't bother me." Loosing her hair didn't bother me either, but loosing her life was uncontainable.

The song Wind beneath my wings replays in my brain until I can't shut it out. Tina is the wind beneath my wings, because through her ordeal she is held everyone up. I just want to hold her tight and cry and rock her as I did when she was a baby. But I know I can't. I can't break down, but it is so hard to hold the tears back sometimes. But her strength has given me the impetus to move forward, in her memory, and make sure that I reach out across the big blue ball we call earth, and make sure that ALL women know there is more than one kind of breast cancer, and this one rarely shows up on a mammogram.

My hope in writing, is that through the knowledge that even one person reading this might one day shed light into the black hole of misdiagnosis and misinformation about Inflammatory Breast Cancer we can be armed for the conflict instead of being confused.

My Tina died because she didn't know. And that is not acceptable!

She didn't know she could have a breast cancer without a lump. She didn't know that a rash or incessant itching could be something other than a bug bite. She didn't know it could come out of nowhere overnight and be in the late stage category of breast cancer, until it was too late.

I didn't either back in 2003, but I do now, which is why I try to every one I can that there is another type of breast cancer that we are not told about. But I do now, and hope by spreading the word other women (and yes men) will benefit from this knowledge. And knowledge is power.

For more information you can go to [www.eraseibc.com](http://www.eraseibc.com).

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