Story of Hope

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The 3rd Silver Linings

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How many more days will I live? …..This was the scariest question I asked my doctor when I was told that I have cancer.

I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer 13 years ago. They may say that it is the friendliest cancer, but still it is cancer and it was in my body. The thyroid gland is very close to the vocal cord, which is very important to me because singing is my bread and butter. So that made me ask… Why?!

It took me a month to decide whether to go with traditional or alternative medicine. Different people and religious groups gave all sorts of confusing advice. Even showbiz fortune tellers made me fear for my life. I finally decided to go through surgery when Coney Reyes talked to me, and it was indeed the right decision. Kuha mo?!!!

At the peak of my career in the 1990s, I had shows left and right, and I slept in cars, airplanes, or during travel. I added more abuse to my body then by drinking and smoking, not to mention eating unhealthy food. In short, I abused my body.

Then cancer struck me! I gained weight, went through depression and loss of eagerness in life. I then realized that God wanted me to take care of my body. That was when I decided to stop being a workaholic. I decided to lie low in the showbiz industry, and I began to choose bookings that are worthwhile.

My lifestyle changed drastically. Somehow, the emotional and physical pain made me a stronger and better person. I started to give value to the things around me, like the beauty of plants and flowers, how nice it is to hear the birds chirping, and to realize the importance of my family. I still love singing and I would gladly sing as often as possible, and it would not be primarily for the material things, but first and foremost to make sure that my well-being is not abuse, and of course because I enjoy doing it.

Up to now, I still continue my yearly check-ups and blood tests. I also maintain a lifetime dose of medications. I have gotten used to it already and treat it as part of my daily routine.

This is one of the reasons why I am now based here in Davao, where life is a bit laid-back, where we can have a simple lifestyle and enjoy nature. I learned how to live one day at a time. My body may not be as strong as before. I continue my physical activities like jogging and playing golf, but this time I know my limits and I know when to stop. I take time to have fun with family and friends, and play around with my children ‘coz according to research, laughter is the best medicine.

Life is too short to dwell on problems. Friends, cancer is not hereditary. We choose to have cancer by choosing the stressful life. Negativity such as anger, sadness, pressure and stress create cancer. Don’t let cancer stop us from living. We always have a choice! Live in the moment! Let us choose to be positive, choose to be happy, and choose to live well!

I dedicate this song to all the ladies…bear in mind that each one of you is special, each one of you is beautiful, each one of us is so blessed to be enjoying life!

…segue to song number(s)…