**ICanServe Foundation**

**Silver Linings 2019**

**STORIES OF HOPE**

**PICC Plenary Hall**

**Audio File Plenary Cam 1**

**RT 53.77**

1:56:33 (clapping) Host: Thank you very much. And now please welcome back our host, Bibeth Orteza Siguion-Reyna! (background music)

1:56:56 Bibeth: Maraming, maraming salamat kay Nikoy De Guzman, isa sa mga bunso namin sa ICanServe. Nung una kong nakilala si Nikoy, batang-bata pa. Ngayon iha mukha ka nang kagalang-galang (audience laughs) Dati hindi eh… (audience laughs) OK, ah bago ko tawagin yung mga makakasama ko, gusto ko lang himayin yung make-up ng Baguio Group dahil ang nasabi ko lang kanina eh isang buong Baguio Group. Actually ang atin pong mga kasama dito na galing sa Baguio ay buhat po sa Minda’s Buddies (clapping), sa Ribbons of Hope, ICanServe Mission of the Sacred Heart Community, Warrior in Me at saka sa WeCanServe BGH Cancer Institute (clapping). Yun po ang bumubuo ng Baguio Delegation at ang tangi kong hiling para sa mga taga-Baguio, bumalik po sana ang ube jam na kulay ube (audience laughs).

1:58:11 Bibeth: At this time, we’re going to call on, wala bang special portion? Ito yung mga ano eh, yung mga kung baga talk show portion natin. Dahil nakita niyo naman, sa ulo ng inyong lingkod ay may maliit na korona. OK. Not quite Pia, not quite Catriona but very much ICanServe.

Audience: Woohoo!!! (clapping)

1:58:37 Bibeth: So we’d like to call on our fighters so that we would hear their testimonies. Narito po, ihahandog namin ang mga movers, supporters and volunteers of ICanServe. Tawagin kong una, journalist and Yoga teacher, nanay ng mga aso, Alya Honasan (clapping).

1:59:17 Bibeth: Sa tunay na buhay po sanggano. President of Minda’s Buddies Cancer Support Group, Baguio City, Marivic Bugasto (clapping).

1:59:36 Bibeth: Yan si Amvic. Ok. Then we have philanthropist, Chu-Chu Madrigal (clapping).

2:00:09 Bibeth: We also have Martial Law and cancer survivor, head of Schools and Community Engagement of the Knowledge Channel, Doris Nuval (clapping).

Audience: Makibaka, huwag matakot!!!

2:00:40 Bibeth: Akalain niyo, una kong nakilala si Doris eh nahuli siya dahil meron siyang gustong bombahin sa isang travel conference. At ang lugar na gusto niya, na nilagyan niya ng bomba PICC. (audience laughs) Diyan mismo di ba? Oh yan siya ang nagtanim.

2:01:02 Bibeth: And now I would like to call on retired medical technologist and member of Living Hope Tagum, Gilda Ruyeras (clapping).

2:01:35 Bibeth: Environmentalist and supporter of the arts, please welcome, Maan Hontiveros (clapping).

2:01:56 Bibeth: Martial Law survivor and gaya, gaya nating lahat, ah… lecturer at the College of Saint Benilde, former Representative of Akbayan Partylist and former Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, please welcome, Etta Rosales (clapping).

2:02:44 Bibeth: Ok, tayo naman, hindi lahat ng tao kailangan magpa-tattoo para maging siga. With or without tattoo, kasama ko po rito puro siga. Let’s… Maupo po tayo at simulan na natin ang ating talakayan. Sino ang gustong sumagot nito? What did you do differently and better after cancer?

2:03:15 Marivic: I laughed harder.

Bibeth: I laughed harder. (clapping) Etta, Mama Etta?

Audience: Woooh…

2:03:29 Etta: Ako, pinag aralan ko ang sarili ko. I became humbler, believe it or not. (clapping)

Bibeth: Maan?

2:03:44 Maan: I learned to go after things that I’d want for myself. (clapping)

Bibeth: Pakatandaan ninyo yung mga ano, yung mga sinasabi ng ating mga kasama dito sa entablado. And you will find out that it will, it’s most likely to apply to you as well no? Ito si…

2:04:06 Amvic: I prayed a lot that I will not die early. (audience laughs and claps)

Bibeth: Chu-Chu…

204:19 Chu-Chu: For me, the fear of cancer, it can be erased. It’s like A: it’s not a killer. There is life after cancer. I think that’s (clapping) the best thing that you know happened to me.

Bibeth: Doris?

2:04:38 Doris: I don’t know coz even before cancer I, I did everything with the lust… for life! (laughs) No I can’t, no, I played harder. Played much harder. Played hard.

2:04:49 Bibeth: Follow up question to that…

2:04:55 Alya: Sorry na skip ako kanina… Ito pina-tattoo ko kasi siga ako, everything is a gift (clapping) Tattoo talaga ah.

Bibeth: Ako kasi hindi ko kinaya yung ano eh, yung tattoo. Nung tina-tattoo-an ako, para sa radiation, yung sigaw ko parang ano eh, sigaw nung nanganganak ako. Hindi ko kinaya ang tattoo. Ok, what did you discover about yourself after cancer? Doris.

2:05:19 Doris: Resilience I guess and that looks don’t really matter. I mean, in terms of having suso and not a --- parang ganun kasi naalala ko yung sinasabi ng iba, hindi daw nila matingnan yung sarili nila sa salamin kasi yun na nga di ba, medyo deformed, parang ganun. Eh I used to really be vain about my body kasi naman di ba? Ah but anyway, pero yun para sa akin natanggal yun, yung vanity.

Bibeth: Ok, Chu-Chu?

2:05:51 Chu-Chu: After cancer I just felt I was revived and I was very blessed so I wanted to share the blessings that I, that I have, that I have received.

2:06:04 Alya: Ako, uhm… I discovered that we have a loving and merciful God because I had the second lease in life (clapping).

Bibeth: Gilda.

2:06:22 Gilda: Ako, I worked harder and I become stronger because of cancer.

Bibeth: Maan.

2:06:32 Maan: I learned to allow my brothers and sisters to take care of me coz I’ve always took care of them. (clapping)

2:06:42 Etta: Ako… pinag-aralan ko yung sarili ko sabi ko di ba? At natuwa ako na duon ko naintindihan kung bakit yung circulation system at saka yung digestive system at yung reproductive system ay magkakasama at konektado lahat. Gulat na gulat ako. Pero hindi ang doctor, yun yung science. Pag-aaralan mo ang science pero hindi yung doctor ang nag-iinitiate nun. Yung connection na yun para nabubuhay tayo, hindi galing sa doctor. So it must come from somewhere else. And that’s when I got to you know, in terms with my own mortality and that where, and that was when it became real. You know, the real existence of somebody else who guides us and who helps us (clapping). Yun, yun ang naging maagap??? para sa akin. Dagdag ko lang Bibeth no? At dahil duon mas madali, coming to terms with yourself and your own mortality makes it easier for you to come to terms with the rest of the people around, yeah (clapping).

2:08:04 Bibeth: But were there changes in your life after cancer?

Etta: Yes.

Bibeth: Like?

Etta: My family became much, much closer. Much, much closer and I became much closer to God. And you know, serving… siyempre, mga aktibista tayo eh di ba? Oo, mga aktibista tayong lahat. So yung pagiging aktibista was in a sense became much more meaningful because it involved individuals na aalagaan no? Yung mismong sinasabing ah… ano ba yung sinasabi nila na ah… pagmamalasakit sa kapwa at hindi mo na hinahanap yung kanan mo, aktibista kasi kami nung bata ako, pero nung tumatanda na ako, kahit sino… ito nga kayo tuwang-tuwa ako, nakikita ko kayo, kababaihan, all over the Philippines ito di ba? Napaka galing! Palakpakan niyo nga sarili ninyo (clapping). Ang ganda-ganda kaya I am emotional. There is a reason for being alive since 4 years ago, since I had cancer, to experience to be with you, people who have cancer but who have hope. At magpapatuloy tayo (clapping).

2:09:35 Bibeth: Totoo ung sinabi mo Etta kasi ako, before my diagnosis I had already classified myself as a retired activist ano? Ang feeling ko, “Oh tama na yung meron akong anti-censorship advocacy, tama na yun.” But when I got diagnosed 3C in 2004, that’s when I realized, I wasn’t going to sit back and wait for cancer to get me. I said I was going to go back into the thick of things and do best of what I can do, not only for family, not only for community, but for country. Yun... kasi talagang na-realize mo, oy, eh alam naman nating lahat yan, I always say this when I speak that, cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence. It’s really like getting a front row ticket to the first night of your wake. Because you find out who really loves you, who pretends to love you. (clapping) You find out that you have time to ask for forgiveness from people that you have wronged. You have time to forgive. So since we’ll all go anyway, you know, better a cancer diagnosis than just going to sleep and then not waking up anymore.

2:10:55 Doris: Parang may quotation about that, I may have cancer but cancer does not have me.

Bbeth: Correct. Kung baga we are not our breasts. Ikaw Gilda, anong mga changes mo sa buhay after cancer?

2:11:06 Gilda: Ah... nung nagka-cancer ako, I was thankful because my family was there, my… but ah, you know… I never… the question is there. But sadly, when I had the cancer, I learned after my cancer that my husband was unfaithful.

Audience: Awwww…

Gilda: So… But ah… so, so sad. And how will I cope with that? With my cancer and here he is… so… what I did, let’s just pray as I said. I accepted this disease but I know that God is bigger than the disease and I trusted God for everything. So when my husband was unfaithful during that time and coping with cancer, but you know God is really faithful and God is loving that He enabled me to cope everything. And now I am still working and work and work. I can… I’m still working and my, sad to say also that my husband is now in dementia. And now, he forgot his girlfriend (audience laughs).

Bibeth: May girlfriend pa?

2:12:27 Gilda: Yun na nga unfaithful siya.

Bibeth: Nagka dementia na siya, nag girl…

Gilda: Ah wala na.

Bibeth: Ah wala na.

Gilda: Tapos na. Oo.

Bibeth: Nakalimutan na niyang manligaw?

Gilda: Nakalimutan na niya… Oo, nakalimutan na niya yung girl. Gosh! So how many, because you know, in Tagum City, I asked my group, the Living Hope, I said “How many of us has this?” So there is about 3. So our members are 30, maybe 10? Out of 10, there is one. So naghiwalay na yung iba. Nag… iniwan na yung iba kasi one toy na lang… (audience laughs)

2:13:04 Bibeth: Kasi one toy na lang, kaya iniwan.

Gilda: Buti sana 2 toys ok lang…

Bibeth: Kasi in Visaya… breast is tutoy eh. So kung one toy lang daw ang nawala baka hindi sila iiwanan, pero 2 toy na yung nawala, 2 breasts kaya daw sila iniwan.

???: Kulang sa toy.

Gilda: Kulang sa toy.

Bibeth: Bakit, bakit sila ganun? Samantalang ang babae naman di ba kahit mawalan ng betlog yung lalaki hindi mo naman iiwan (audience laughs) (clapping). Ang… Alya, ikaw? Sagutin mo, what are the biggest changes in life after… me, I like it that after cancer, there were a lot of things I could get away with. I could say suso in public without feeling embarrassed. And I could also say betlog, ok. (audience laughs)

2:14:03 Alya: Nung nagka-cancer ako, na-realize ko na kahit kalbo pala ako ang ganda-ganda ko (audience cheering and clapping). But I also learned that like Maan, I can relate, I had to let other people take care of me coz we like to take charge. And kailangan humina ka muna bago ka lumakas para malakas ka after, after all of that.

Bibeth: As I’ve said, pakikinggan ninyo yung mga sinasabi ng mga kasama natin dito because you will find out that all these things, all these statements apply to you. Amvic.

2:14:35 Amvic: Ano yung question (audience laughs)…

Bibeth: Ano ang changes sa buhay mo after cancer?

Amvic: Tutoy, joke lang yun…

Bibeth: Joke lang. Kunyari ka pa… Oh… (audience laughs)

2:14:57 Maan: Bibeth? Bibeth, can I make dagdag? While she’s thinking.

Bibeth: Yeah.

Maan: Ok, ahm… after I got diagnosed with cancer, I realized na masyado akong siga dati di ba? Kaya ko ‘to lahat, I was always the one solving everybody’s problem. Kaya I decided, wait a minute, bakit kaya nagka-cancer ako dahil lahat ng mga problema ng tao nasa likod ko. So I said I’ll do something that I really want for myself and that was to go back to school. So I went back to school at the age of 57, 58 to study music. 5 years, 5 years ako nag-aral ng classical guitar, mga kaklase ko 18 and 19 years old. Sa tingin ko, yun talaga ang nagpagaling sa akin, that I’ve spent 5 years of my life learning how to play guitar. Absolutely worthwhile.

2:15:53 Bibeth: Pero alam mo, alam mo Maan, maraming nagugulat when they found out that meron kang breast cancer because it was a well kept secret. How, how long a survivor are you?

Maan: Ah since 2005, so that’s 14 years.

Bibeth: And that’s just one year after me. And I see your sister in events, yung mga ganyan, hindi niya nababanggit sa akin.

Maan: Kasi Bibeth closely guarded secret po yun sapagkat my mother died of breast cancer. My grandmother on my father side died of breast cancer. And my father was 85 years old when I got diagnosed. So inisip ko, padadaanin ko pa ba si Daddy sa isang worry na naman about this. So I told my brothers and sisters Dad must not know. So we had to keep it a secret. So only my close family, my very close classmates from grade school, and June Keithley, Abby Tan and Marilou Diaz-Abaya who were also diagnosed with cancer at the same time that I was, sila lang, sila lang ang nakaka alam. I only came out after my father died about 4 years ago.

2:17:11 Alya: You still took care of him.

Maan: Ha?

Alya: You still took care of him.

Maan: Yes I took care of my dad. He never found out. He died at the age of 93. In his own bed without having gotten sick, he died the way he wanted to go and he never knew that I had, I had breast cancer.

2:17:27 Bibeth: But you went through treatment when he was there.

Maan: I had, I had double mastectomy with reconstruction, siyempre because if I came home with flat chest, mahalata di ba? So I had to go to New York, pinagawa ko dun at sinabi ko sa doctor, give me big boobs. Siyempre, kung magpapa-reconstruct ka lang naman eh kukunin din sa fat ng tiyan mo, magkaka tummy tuck ka eh di kunin mo na lahat ng fat dun. So if anything at all, my father only thought I gained weight when I came back. So never did he find out.

2:18:01 Bibeth: Ako naman hindi ako na-depress kasi dati malaki na ako talaga eh di ba? I’m a double D. So nung natanggal yung isa, tinitingnan ko, ah hindi naman ako dapat malungkot kasi sabi nga ng kaibigan kong Vic Sotto sa akin, kaya daw hindi ako na-depress kasi yung natirang isa pwede ko pa daw hatiin at hindi ikakahiya… (audience laughs) That’s why I didn’t get sad. But similarly Chu-Chu, you’re also a very private person. It wasn’t a well known fact that you had breast cancer. Yung sister mo was what we had heard about. So how did you manage to keep things under wraps and why did you decide to do it that way?

2:18:42 Chu-Chu: Ahm… I didn’t keep… it was my sister who kept things under wraps ok. As a matter of fact it’s probabaly because of my sister that I decided to be open to my children and come out with breast cancer. And it’s also, they were asking, I’ll make sabay na the question that it was basically what changed my life after cancer. I vowed that I will try to help as many people with cancer because I can. Parang if you can save a life right, my God, I mean that even one life in a lifetime, or one life in a year, I think that’s already a feather in someone else’s cap.

Bibeth: Yes, totoo po yun (clapping). Totoo po yung sinabi ni Ms. Chu-Chu. Talagang tumutulong po siya sa mga nangangailan ng tulong dito. And one of the saddest things kasi I’ve heard about cancer, I was going to, I was going to do some tests no? tapos lipat ako nang lipat sa iba-iba, from the cashier to the ganyan. And then I heard someone say, mas madali pa sa akin ang mamatay na lang, ibalot ako sa banig at itapon ako sa ilog. I felt very, very sad nung narinig ko yun. And then that’s when I realized that my task was also to help those that I could help kasi I mean you know, magpapa chemotherapy ka, hindi ka naman sasakay ng jeep, for me ha pag-uwi. Hindi naman ako maglalaba ng damit pagdating ko sa bahay. So papano ko iisiping kawawa naman ako hindi ako tutulong sa iba, bakit meron din ako niyan. No eh, iba eh. So… you don’t put yourself in a situation na che, itsura niyong lahat. Hindi pwede.

2:20:39 Chu-Chu: Can I add?

Bibeth: Yes.

Chu-Chu: Actually, that’s exactly how I felt. People asked me, did you get depressed, no. I said I looked at it half full. Kasi when I was diagnosed, I thanked God, I thanked my family. But most of all, I had the means to have myself cured like as you’ve said. So that’s why I vowed, if I can help, I cannot help the whole world, I wish I can, but in my very little way, if I can help the whole world, I will. And the one that’s secretive I think that’s the point I want to say, my sister was very secretive with her cancer. And she decided she loved her daughter so much, she didn’t want her daughter to worry. So she kept it and when she decided to seek medical help, it was too late. And so, basically she passed. And it also helped because her daughter who she loved, who she kept it for, she says her one wish is that her mother should have told her. So the minute I was diagnosed, I told my daughters right away.

2:21:49 Bibeth: Ikaw ready ka na magsalita? (audience laughs)

Amvic: Nakabwelo na. Ano… on my part, cancer was… a blessing. Lahat hindi ba, yung sinusumpa yung may cancer ganun, ganyan. Sa akin blessing. Ang past ko pangit. I did things that I really, really regret. But nung nagka-cancer ako, talagang 180 degrees, bumait ako (audience laughs).

2:22:27 Marivic: Yan talaga, maniwala tayo, talaga.

Bibeth: Yan lagay na yan bumait ka.

Amvic: Bumait ako at saka ano… ahm… I, I joined the faith community. Yun talaga gumanda ang buhay ko and then ano, na-redeem ko ang sarili ko. Self esteem eto, at saka gumanda din ako (audience laughs) (clapping) kahit walang suso.

2:22:56 Bibeth: Dati kasi yung mga Christmas party kokonti pa lang ang ICanServe. Ang mga Christmas party ginagawa sa bahay ko. Tapos pag duma, bumababa galing sa Baguio si Amvic, may dala siyang mga salad na para sa amin, pinaghahati-hati naming nuon. Kaya lagi namin pinagdadasal si Amvic na gumaling kasi iniisip namin, pano pa tayo makakakuha ng libreng salad na may strawberry? Kailangan… Alya… Ok, people who were diagnosed with cancer, a good number will always fall into deep depression. And some people would just take it for granted, sabi eh nag Bible Study naman ako, nag ganito ganyan. And then they think na in a stage of denial, denying the depression, not necessarily denying the cancer but denying the depression. You went through that?

2:23:55 Alya: Well, not really denying kasi may history na ako ng topak eh even before. Nauna yung depression ko bago sa ano, sorry, topak talaga. Nauna yung depression ko. So nung bumalik siya after cancer, as I was saying kanina, medyo alam mo pag survivor ka ng cancer, parang mahihiya ka na, magaling na ako, ok na ako, everything’s back to normal then biglang hindi ka pa masaya. Parang ano bang gusto mong mangyari di ba? Like you already have the means, you’re fine then why are you still sad? But there’s an emotional, there’s an emotional upheaval that happened na kailangan i-address na hindi pwedeng basta mawawala na lang yan. Kailangan… may nangyari sa buhay mo na bumaligtad yung priorities mo, kailangang mo talaga, katulad ng ginawa ni Ma’am hahalughugin mo talaga kung ano talagang kahulugan ng sarili mo. Paano ka umayos? So… hindi siya sakit, hindi siya sakit, I mean hindi, actually sakit nga siya per se, so huwag kayo, huwag tayong mahihiya na sabihing, “Oh malungkot pa ako”. Hihingi ka talaga ng tulong, mahirap gawin yun especially kung sisiga-siga ka eh di ba? Parang feeling mo, ok na ako, I’m fine. Everybody goes back to their normal life. But for you, life is a new normal. So you have to redefine the parameters of your life and when you figure out what your new priorities are, that’s when you can move forward. Yun lang.

2:25:09 Bibeth: Kasi lahat naman tayo talaga dumadaan ng ano eh, dumadaan ng depression. Na ako minsan pag nalulungkot, ang nakakaloka kasi naka-tag ho ako ng messages dun sa, mga yung sa social media, “Malungkot po ako Miss Bibeth, patawanin niyo ako.”

Alya: Demanding…

2:25:29 Bibeth: Parang ah… so you have to, you have just really shoulder on. Sino dito ang may mga anak na dalaga? I mean, do you, do you have the fear that the cancer that you got you could pass on to your children? Chu-Chu…

2:25:43 Doris: Ako hindi sa children ko, because I only have one kid and he’s a boy, but in my family kasi ako na nga nag umpisa ng trend, parang ganun. 2005 I got mine and then 2008, yung eldest namin na kapatid tapos many years later ung pamangkin ko in 2017. And it’s like, una na nga nung nakuha nung sister ko 3 years after mine, “Ate naman, alam ko namang ako ang idol mo pero bakit do you put, bakit pati dun susundan mo ako?” Parang ganun, so now I’m thinking I don’t have a daughter so I have a granddaughter, I’m thinking kaya nga in-attend-an ko ung gene thingy, the, the topic na gene ano… kasi I wanna find out if it can in fact be passed on sa aking apo. So parang yun ang worry. Worry ko ngayon, or concern.

2:26:33 Bibeth: You worry about the same thing Chu-Chu?

Chu-Chu: Well, I guess as a mother you always like the best for your kids. If you have cancer, it’s not, for me it’s not so much as a fear but at least I know that you know, well I had the back up test and genetically it said, no. But yet, I also got cancer right? So, I don’t think we should fear after having cancer. I think we… like everything else, sometimes when you fear something then it happens right? So I just pray that, I pray that none of my daughters will have it. But I’m not going to say that I fear that they will have it. No, I don’t think so. I just, will trust, will trust God, will trust ourselves and if it happens, let’s do the best we can with what we have. (clapping)

2:27:27 Bibeth: Parang kung baga… higit sa lahat kung ano pa man ang mga gene mutations na yan, ang pinamamana natin, ipamamana sa ating mga anak ay ang kapasidad na lumaban katulad din ng paglaban natin. (clapping) Next question, Marivic, Stage 4 ka na. Ilang taon ka nang Stage 4?

2:27:54 Marivic: Ahm… 12? (audience cheering)

Bibeth: Di ba? How has your cancer experience been different from the first time nung hindi ka pa, hindi ka pa Stage 4? May pagkakaiba ba yung pakiramdam mo sa sarili, yung tapang mo bang lumaban nabawasan? How do you handle things?

Marivic: Ano, yung initial diagnosis in 2005 yun yung talagang natakot ako. Pero yung nung recurrence na, nakaya ko dati eh, di mas kaya ko ngayon. Yung parang ganun. And then yun ano, gaya nung sabi ko kanina sa ano sa Room 2, I laughed it all the way hanggang maka abot ako dito. How did I cope? Yun nga, first by the grace of God. Pangalawa, yung suporta ng pamilya saka ng mga kaibigan. Dasal sila nang dasal, talagang ano, pagkatapos mamamatay ka, nakakahiya di ba? (audience laughs) Kaya kailangan mabuhay ako, tapos yun… yung positivity, yun lahat na lang kahit na pangit na sitwasyon, eh pagandahin mo di ba? Yung, yung mindset. Yung negative na frame, eh di i-tilt mo nang konti para gumanda, ganun.

2:29:24 Bibeth: Isipin mo, tayo lang naman mga babae di ba lagi araw-araw nakikita mo sa mga social media, lagi nilang nilalagay think positive, think positive. Ako talaga pag nagpapa test ako sa doctor, palagi ko iniisip think negative, think negative (audience laughs). Kasi isang beses, nagpa, nagpa check up ako sa hospital. Di ba pag nagpapa-check up ka ang unang mag-i-interview sa iyo ano, residente. Tapos first question ng residente, “What do you have?” Sabi ko, “I’m a breast cancer survivor. I had my mastectomy in 2004, blah, blah, blah. I went for radiation ganyan, ganyan.” “Ano pa ho?” Sabi ko, “I’m also hyper tensive. My high normal is 140/90 everyday.” “Ano pa ho?” Sabi ko, “I’m also diabetic.” Sabi nung residente, “Ano pa ho?” Eh napikon na ako, “Kulang pa yan? (audience laughs) Aba’y iha, dagdagan mo pa ng isa ang sakit ko, patay na ako, maawa ka naman sa tatlo, tama na yan.” Makatanong kayo, ano pa ho? Ok… Gilda, ikaw naman.

2:30:33 Gilda: Yes ma’am.

Bibeth: Bilang babaeng dumaan dun sa sinabi mo na nga na naging unfaithful ang asawa mo, sa ating sitwasyon, ano pa ang mga paraan na nakikita mo for, for our empowerment? Ano pa ang pwede nating gawin, with or without a husband beside us?

Gilda: With or without a husband beside us, kasi ano… I will, I will start from ano no? Actually my Onco med told me na pag, nung nalaman ko nga na meron siya, sabi ko, “Doc…” Iyak na ako nang iyak siyempre di ba? Alangan i-deny mo na ano hindi ka nasasaktan.

Bibeth: Oo at saka alangan naman tumawa ka pa?

Gilda: Oo, so ngayon sabi ko, “Doc, ganito…” Sabi niya “Di leave him. Ano magpapacast siya” Sa akin naman siguro dahil si doktora is very scared about me di ba? So ang sa kaniya is ako hindi yung husband ko, so “You can leave him if you want.” Sabi ko, “Leave him if you want. Parang hindi yata pwede eh.” Hindi.

Bibeth: Hindi mo iniwan?

Gilda: Hindi ko iniwan. Sabi ko “Gusto mo akong iwan? Umalis ka.” Hindi ako iniwan. Anyway, yun tayong mga babae huwag niyong iwan yung bahay. Paalisin niyo siya. Di ba? (audience clapping) eh… (too many people talking at the same time)

Bibeth: Oo naman.

Gilda: Huwag tayong umalis, bahay mo yan. Ok so ngayon, patuloy lang ako, so “Lord help me. I cannot do this, it’s only by your grace.” Sabi ko, “Papano ito doc, ah Lord?” Sabi niya, sabi ko. Basa lang ako nang basa. “Lord help me to love him again.” Sabi ko. Pero yung babae niya saan kaya yun? Sabi ng mga anak ko “Mama, no need to look for that girl. Ano na? Bakit ano pa? Para sa ano? Sino siya?” Sabi ko, “Anong gagawin ko?” Pag, pag nandiyan siya, di ba ok ka pag may mga kasama tayo. Pag wala nang kasama ikaw na lang pag gabi, wala na depressed ka na naman. Sabi ko, “I need a psychiatrist. Doc tulungan mo ako. Ako hindi na ako makatulog.” Sabi niya “Oh sige, parang dapat ata hindi ikaw ang gagamutin, hindi ikaw ang gagamutin ko. Yung asawa mo.” Sabi ko, “Ah doc. Sige na doc para makatulog ako kasi dapat ang cancer makatulog kasi dapat ano ba yun, 12:00 ba yun until 4:00 yung immune system natin gumagana.” Sabi ko, “Papano yan doc mamamatay na ako doc.” Sabi niya, “Hindi pa.” So I just prayed na sana ung asawa ko ma-love ko ulit. So I’m riding my car, while driving the car, I always tuned that music, played that music, (sings the song) “I cherish the, ano yun, the treasure, the treasure of you. Life long companion, I gave myself to you.” Tama na. (audience laughs) So ganyan lang, binabalik-balik ko hanggang sa na-love ko siya. Yung na love ko siya, na-dementia na. (audience laughs) (clapping)

2:33:50 Bibeth: Kaya niya nakalimutan mangbabae…

Gilda: Thank you Lord. Thank you Lord, it’s a blessing again. (audience laughs) Cancer is a blessing and dementia is a blessing. (audience laughs) Everything is a gift.

2:34:02 Bibeth: Oh sa mga aktibista dito, tatanungin ko si Etta at saka si Doris at kung sino pa ang gustong sumagot ano? Ano ang mas mahirap labanan? Ang diktadurya o ang cancer? (audience laughs and cheers)

2:34:29 Etta: Eh yung diktadurya, cancer… oo, cancer ng lipunan yan. Pero magkakasama kayong lahat di ba? Magkakasama kayong lahat sa paglaban niyan at ah…. Laging may pag-asa habang lumalakas, lumalakas, lumalakas tayo. At ang pag-asa yung pagpapalakas ng mamamayan at yung paghina nung diktador at yung mga puwersa niya. Hindi ba… (clears throat) ang cancer kaya nga nung, nung nanalo na laban kay Marcos, nakita mo kung gano kahina sapagkat yung mga puwersa na sumusuporta sa kanya, yung Estados Unidos, sabi “Cut and cut cleanly.” Di ba? So napilitan siya. Ibig sabihin ng cut and cut cleanly, bumitiw ka na pero dapat walang blood shed. So that, yun ang dahilan kung bakit si Marcos hindi talaga gumamit ng dahas nung bumitiw siya. At pagkatapos nun, yung militar mismo nahati na rin. At merong pumanig sa taong bayan. Ang pakiramdam mo, lahat maraming magkakasama kayo.

2:35:57 Etta: Ang cancer, may pakiramdam ka madalas kung minsan mag-isa ka na nilalabanan yan di ba? Singularly, si Ceres nga oo kasama ko rin, sabi, dinescribe niya sa akin kung gaano ka, yung proseso na dinaanan niya. At ako rin dumaan ako sa ganung klaseng proseso na siyempre ano na ang mangyayari. Pero (clears throat) mag-isa ka. Ang lakas mo nakukuha duon sa mga malapit na malapit sa iyo. Yun yung pagkakaiba. At 5 years lang mula nung magka-cancer ako, mula nung nagkaroon ako ng remission. So that’s just 5 years ago, 2015 pero pag na, ang pakiramdam ko I’m with everybody now at yung naging sustainable yung relasyon ko sa pamilya ko dahil naging mas malapit sila sa akin sa pagmamalasakit. Yun yung diperensiya. Ang pakikipaglaban sa diktador impersonal yan eh, impersonal. Pero yung cancer is a very personal experience no? So that’s the difference.

2:37:27 Bibeth: Sa akin naman kasi, personal experience ung cancer ko. What enriched my life about cancer kasi di ba as they say friendship is exactly which you formed through a common set of experience. Kaklase mo ng grade 6, elementary school, kaibigan mo. Kaklase mo ng high school, kaibigan mo. Kaklase mo ng college, kapitbahay mo, naging kaibigan mo, friends. But cancer, all I need to do is stare at a person who has cancer, eye to eye, and immediately I know that person is a friend because we went through the same thing together. The diagnosis, the fear of after the diagnosis, what will I do? Where do I go from here? When I see people like that, it’s a sister who’s out there, and I do not feel alone. Yun naman ang ano ko (clapping). Sa, sa ICanServe, kahit inaapi ako ng mga sisters ko sa ICanServe (audience laughs). But seriously kailangan natin na nating mag, magmadali at kailangan na nating i-wrap up na but one last queston for you, meron bang isang bagay na sana alam mo when you were first diagnosed to have made the whole experience any easier?

2:39:00 Maan: No, it happened because it had to. It happened the way it did because it had to happen that way I think. And that’s why like, like somebody else said blessing siya eh. So may tinuro siya sa akin. Early on lang, nag desisyon ako hindi ako magagalit. Hindi ko aawayin ang Diyos, kukunin ko kung anong leksyon dito. So… as is, I won’t change a thing. Parang kanta yun ano, I wouldn’t change a thing because that was a gift that changed my life for the better I think.

2:39:30 Bibeth: Amvic?

Amvic: Ahm…. Madalas kong sabihin yung, madalas ang tao di ba pagka may masamang nangyari yung why? Pag inisip ko pagka ako ba sabihin ko “Lord, why?” Eh baka sabihin naman Niya “Why not?” (audience laughs) di ba? Tapos, nung bumabait ako tapos nung nangyari pa rin nang ganyan saka yung talagang I was saying na I trusted, ahm…. magkukuwan, yung why Lord naman… yung konti lang, pero now you know, when I ask why, “Lord why do You love me this much?” (clapping) Kasi, 14 years. Na out live ko yung anak, nauna pa nga ung anak ko eh sa akin nung 2014. And then 10 months after, yun ding ano si Mr. Unfaithful (audience laughs) di ba? Yung, yung ganun, namatay din.

2:40:40 Bibeth: Sumagot, ang dami pala nila. (audience laughs)

Amvic: Kasi nga nahiwalay siya, one toy, iniwan. Ako talagang, talagang iiwan. Kasi no toys… (audience laughs) Sorry. But anyway, yun, ahm… cancer has brought me back to my God na talagang ang buhay ko nga sabi ko, pangit dati pero ngayon talagang maganda, magandang-maganda na. And then yun, yung Stage 4, there’s hope kasi sabi nga nila habang may buhay, may?

Audience: Pag-asa.

Amvic: Habang may pag-asa, may?

Audience: Buhay…

Amvic: Hindi yan, may bagyo. (audience laughs)

2:41:31 Bibeth: Yan ah… (clapping) Kaya ho ang pangalan niyang totoo ay Ma. Victoria, Victoria siya, at saka siya ho sa grupo talaga namin, siya ang comedienne. Ako sex symbol lang. (audience laughs) Chu-Chu…

2:41:58 Chu-Chu: Hindi naman… no it’s, as everybody said what happened has to happen but ako I think I was very fortunate at the expense of my sister because my sister didn’t… go for medical intervention and she waited and she kept it. Maybe thanks to her, up there, right away I acted from the time of my diagnosis until the time of my surgery was 2 weeks. So parang for me, you know, early detection but early action is the way to fight breast cancer. (clapping)

2:42:38 Doris: Ako, no, no there’s nothing I would have changed or can’t change coz the way I’ve lived my life before ganun din yung ginagawa ko. But now I feel much happier because of again, because of the sisterhood. And even if I want to do more, sometimes my other advocacy gets in the way.

2:43:00 Bibeth: Gilda?

Gilda: Ako naman ahm…. Ano, I have to love my husband (audience laughs) til death do us part. Til death do us part. Di ba I vowed to the Lord. Hindi ganito talaga, di ba nung naisip ko, “Ano ito hiwalayan ko na ba talaga?” Talagang hiwalayan ko na. Sabi ng mga anak ko “Ano Ma sige ka lang iyak diyan, ano? Hiwalayan mo na yan.” Sabi ko, “Hiwalayan ko na? Lord? Di ba Lord nag vow ako sa Iyo, before all the witnesses.” Siya ang may sala. Ako, wala hindi ako naka ano… so papatuloy ako na I have to continue, be faithful to You, Lord because I vowed to You that I married this guy, even if, even though… at ano pang even? Even if…. I’m uneven.

2:43:56 Bibeth: Even if I’m uneven… (audience laughs)

Gilda: So sabi ko, really, now really I love my husband and we travel a lot and then I love my husband, I have to love him even if ano na hindi na niya ako makilala na ako ang asawa niya. (audience laughs). Mahirap…

2:44:16 Bibeth: Alam mo…

Amvic: Ate B… siya yata ang may diprensya (audience laughs)

Bibeth: Ikaw daw may difference… (audience laughs)

Gilda: (laughing) kayo… kayo enjoy dito… sa susunod kayo na dito ah…

2:44:38 Bibeth: Maan.

Maan: I wouldn’t change anything kasi what I went through was a healing thing for my whole family. Number 1: I had, my younger brother was living in the States. And he was the youngest, second to the youngest when my mother got diagnosed with cancer. And he could not cope kasi di ba yung pamilya natin, iba-iba yung reaction. Yung iba, like me, I immediately jumped out there na I helped my father look for a treatment for her and everything. Ako yung, ako yung, “Sige Dad we’ll fight this.” My other sisters were like the yung deer na naka-flashlight, naka-headlight, just like that, they couldn’t do anything. The youngest, the youngest boy was, could not accept it. So he would stay away from home and he spent his time in Ateneo with the Glee Club and he never was home. Yun pala, all these years, he felt guilty about it. He’s back, he was in the States when I got diagnosed. He came to New York to take care of me. Siya ung pumunta sa ospital. And he’s quit working for 4 days while I was in the hospital. And he took care of me. Siya pa yung nag bathe sa akin. And all that. And when, when, when we were released from the hospital, the nurses were telling me, “Ay Ms. Mary Anne, you may go but may we keep your brother?” (audience laughs) Kasi they had never seen a family member as dedicated. And then he told me just as we were preparing to leave the hospital, ang sabi ko “Thank you Paul. Thank you for everything.” Sabi niya, he broke down and he cried. And he said, “You know I’ve always felt so guilty about not being there for mommy.” So I told him, “Paul don’t feel bad because I was there. Dad was there to take care of her. And maybe you were reserved to take care of me.”

2:46:31 Bibeth: Ay….

Audience: Awwww…. (clapping)

Maan: Di ba? And so, so my cancer enabled my brother to get rid of all that guilt that he had because he was able to do for me what he could not do for my mother. (clapping)

Bibeth: Binabawi ko na ho… hindi ho ako sex symbol, drama actress lang (audience laughs) Etta?

2:47:03 Amvic: Why not both?

Etta: Ang tanong do I regret anything?

Bibeth: No, it’s anything that you wish you knew before you got, found out you had cancer. Would you have changed how you handled your diagnosis?

Etta: Well actually, actually… you know when I was 12 years old, I had lumpectomy already sa right. Oo… so because my father side, my mother side had cancer. Pero…. Nung malaki na nga ako, I mean 5 years ago, umasa ako dun sa radiologist and you know, the radiologist has been… pinabayaan ko lang. I should have actually taken a second opinion, and chances are lumpectomy lang yun. But anyway, tapos na yun eh. And you’re not going to blame anybody, tapos na yun. What it has done, what it has done, are you in a hurry or something…

Bibeth: Oo, pinagmamadali na tayo…

Etta: Ah pinagmamadali na tayo… ok, I’ll make it quick. But what it has done is not, it has actually helped me to understand ang hirap ah, it has helped me to understand that the healing process necessitates learning how to forgive. Forgive yourself so that you can also forgive others and post cancer, it has helped me learn how to be much more sensitive, sensitive to people, kapwa-tao. Sa akin mas mahalaga yun kasi yung collective struggle yung ganun, hangga’t hindi mo nape-personalized at nabibigyan ng pagmamalasakit ang kapwa tao at hindi kinakailangan pamilya, marami ka ring kailangang pag-aralan. At ito ang tinuro ng cancer sa akin, kaya mas buhay na rin ako para sa pag-asa natin (clapping).

2:49:14 Bibeth: Parang ano lang yan eh… maraming nagtatanong sa akin, bakit daw ganun kami nung anak kong lalaki, mag-asaran, mag biruan. How can you take it? I can take anything from my son because when I was diagnosed with cancer and we were discussing the treatment options, my son suddenly said “Mama you will get well.” I said, “Why do you know?” And then he said “Because the word mother is embedded in chemotherapy.” It’s actually che-mother-apy. (clapping) Kaya natitiis ko yung kaklase ni Alex kahit nakakainis siya. Ok. Now… we have no words. Words are not enough to thank these wonderful ladies that we’re here on stage with.

2:50:00 Bibeth: As an ending to today’s affair, una, isang round of applause ulit para sa ating mga kapatid dito sa entablado (clapping and cheering). Tayo raw tayo, minamadali na tayo, picture taking na daw. Isang shot lang ha, isang anggulo lang, pinapababa na kami. (music in the background)

2:50:19 **END OF AUDIO FILE**

**END OF INTERVIEW**