

# Firing My Doctor

Category: Worry

written by Marianna Crane | May 31, 2018

I didn't decide to "fire" my doctor on the spot.

During my last appointment with her, I'd filled Dr. Green in on the details of my mastectomy. I happily reported that the surgeon had declared me "cured"—the tumor's margins were clear and my nodes were negative. Because I had large breasts and wanted to avoid wearing a heavy prosthesis, I'd had a reduction on my healthy breast at the same time. A routine biopsy of that tissue had showed dysplasia—abnormal cells. As a nurse, I'd researched this finding and found scant evidence that it would develop into cancer. My surgeon had concurred.

As I sat on the exam table while Dr. Green stood by the sink drying her hands, I told her I'd decided not to worry about it.

Without making eye contact, Dr. Green said, "I'd worry."

I froze.

Never one to have a quick comeback, I left the office without a word about her offhand remark. It wasn't the comment itself that concerned me, but her apparent indifference to my feelings. Plus, what good would worrying do?

Having a potentially life-threatening illness had boosted my resolve to surround myself with people who would cheer me, not depress me. Dr. Green was a competent doctor technically but lacked sensitivity—something that I value in a patient-physician relationship. I decided to look for another primary-care provider.

After calling Dr. Green's office to cancel my next appointment, I requested that my records be sent to my new doctor. The receptionist asked if I would tell Dr. Green why I was leaving. I agreed, and before I could get nervous Dr. Green was on the line.

I relayed the incident at my last appointment; I said that her "I'd worry" statement had left me shaken and disturbed. Whether I was right or wrong, what I wanted from a provider was someone who cared for my physical *and* mental needs.

Surprisingly, she thanked me. I hung up the phone feeling rattled that I had voiced such a candid assessment. Gradually, however, jubilation replaced anxiety. I realized that I had control over my life and those whom I allowed into it.

I can only hope that my forthrightness with Dr. Green improved her communication skills.

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