

ROYGBIV +1

Category: Silver Linings

written by Deborah Levin | March 17, 2021

This winter, it seemed to me that silver linings were popping up everywhere, like starbursts cast as fairy dust from Tinkerbell's wand. Everyone seemed to be finding them, but few had any meaning for me. When the vaccine first became available in the new year, I was desperate to get it. Newly diagnosed with cancer, I wanted all the extra protection I could get. I have now received both vaccines and do, indeed, feel safer.

But I'm still not seeing any silver leaking from the sky. Like a horse with blinders, I can see only straight ahead, and everything leads towards a doctor's office, hospital lab or treatment room. No sunshine, no clouds, no silver linings in any of those places.

And yet... masks! Being immuno-suppressed from chemotherapy means I need to be wary of going out in public. I'm quite sure it never would have occurred to me before to wear a mask, but now that they are mandated, it's become welcome silver armor for me.

Then just last week a different color lining burst through the clouds of my despair. I learned about an organization for women with breast cancer. It is run by peer counselors, all cancer survivors themselves, and although each has had a unique experience, there are many common denominators. A phone call put me in touch immediately with an experienced counselor who seemed as eager to listen to my story as I was to tell it. Of course I have friends and family willing to do the same, but this kind of support is totally different; it offers healing and hope that can come only from someone who has been there, in the pink of breast cancer.

When a pink ribbon became the symbol of breast cancer awareness in 1991, I never embraced or endorsed the idea. It was just too painful a reminder of my mother's struggle with the disease a decade earlier. Now, as a new member of that sisterhood, I'm uncertain about identifying with it myself.

But I recognize the value of something bright on the horizon, something shiny in the heavens above. For me, pink is the new silver, symbol of possibility and promise, in a Covid world and beyond. And while it's not exactly a rainbow and a pot of gold, it is enough to make me feel fortunate I have access to the healthcare services I need.

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