



January 2021

The Gift of Strength

by Marcia Gurche



The dictionary has a number of words to define the noun *strength*, e.g., endurance, power, force and vigor. Our *One to One* members have found various strengths within themselves – powers which they only discovered following their cancer diagnosis. Some of these were revealed at our December meeting, where it became apparent that *strength* takes many forms.

Patience is a virtue, and it is also a superpower. Several of the ladies described having newfound patience, along with resilience and perseverance. Being diagnosed with a disease such as ovarian cancer during a time of pandemic has been particularly challenging. The added support of family and friends is not as readily available, and fear of the unknown is magnified with the specter of Covid lurking in every nook and cranny.



One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group**
c/o Marilyn Brozovic
4793 Alton Dr.
Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

Learning to accept change has been a newly acquired strength for some. For one of our members, breaking out of her own personality to appreciate things she had taken for granted before, such as the beauty of nature, was a strength that she was grateful to have gained.



Some ladies who were accustomed to being independent have found it difficult to accept help from others upon their diagnosis. They have had to dig deep to find the strength to accept the assistance offered, when needed, as well as to give themselves permission to take it easy.

Self-awareness and mindfulness of the blessings we have were mentioned as strengths that have become enhanced in some of the ladies. A renewal of *faith* into her life was a special gift, aka, *strength*, received by one of our ladies – knowing that she can deal with whatever comes her way, but that God is still in control. One of our ladies shared that she knows that if she falls down she will also be able to get up – a strength she might not have had prior to diagnosis.

An interesting strength that was mentioned, in my opinion, was one lady realizing she was not the teacher, but was the *student*. We are all on a path to learning and need to be open to what is ahead of us.

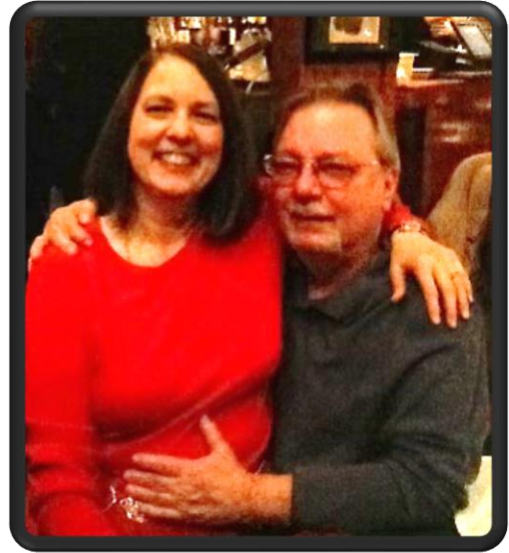
Before cancer, how often did we truly feel sorry for someone when we heard of their misfortune? Following our own diagnosis, however, there is a general consensus that sincere *empathy* prevails within us. It is new, it is heartfelt, and it cuts to the core.



PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche

It isn't often that a 14-year-old and a 16-year-old fall in love and that love endures for 43 years – through high school and through all of the turmoil that marriage and life in general can bring. But **Kathy** and **Stanley Dominczak** were fortunate to have a fairytale story like that. While their beautiful life together did end tragically with Stan's untimely death in 2017, it wasn't a Romeo and Juliet situation. A lot of parents would discourage such young kids from pursuing their relationship, but Kathy's own parents had been in a similar position, so they were very supportive of Kathy and Stan. Kathy told her mom early on, "I'm going to marry that man," and there was no looking back.



Kathy is a vivacious and "take no prisoners" type of person, so once she knew she wanted to be with Stan for the rest of her life, she set her goals and she and Stan started building their life together. Upon graduation, Stan attended trade school and began his career as a tool maker. Kathy's ultimate goal was to be a wife and mother, so she decided to forego college and hired on as a teller at National Bank of Detroit, where her mother, **Lorice**, was already an assistant manager. Over the next 41 years, Kathy climbed the corporate ladder at NBD, working all over Michigan in different branches. She loved the people she serviced and the ones she worked with. Kathy had a number of cringe-worthy experiences in the various branches, such as being robbed at least *30 times* over her four decades with the bank. While being robbed at gunpoint is certainly frightening, she is proud to say that the experiences helped make her a stronger and more fearless person. Additionally, it led to her being instrumental in helping establish an electronic door system in some city offices, which greatly cut down on the number of robberies and ensured the safety of employees and customers alike.

Kathy and Stanley enjoyed the simple life and spent their down-time together camping, golfing, bowling and watching sports. They started camping with a pup tent and gradually progressed to a pop-up camper. They spent a lot of time up in Caseville and Port Austin, which became their "home away from home." The Detroit Tigers, Lions and Red Wings were near and dear to their hearts and they loved to attend games and watch them on TV. They were self-proclaimed Red Wing fanatics, and they even made a Red Wing garden in their yard. Kathy loves all sports and played fast pitch softball on a Warren league. She is an avid bowler and at one time bowled on five leagues simultaneously, carrying a 200 average. Not too shabby!!!



(Cont.'t on next page)



The best laid plans don't always pan out, however, and Kathy's number one goal of being a mother was never realized. She has embraced her role as aunt to her sister **Debbie's** four children, and as "honorary aunt" to numerous children of some dear friends. Kathy has been "mom" to several beautiful golden retrievers over the years and presently she has two special goldies, **Duncan** and **Lola**. She recently lost **Walker**, who was her "heart and soul" and who saw her through her cancer diagnosis and through Stan's death.

Losing Stan suddenly, only one and a half years after her ovarian cancer diagnosis, was devastating, and Kathy found herself paralyzed with anxiety and fear for the first time in her life. With her powerful faith and the help of her friend, **Father Michael**, and other amazing friends, Kathy has been able to pull herself back from a very dark place. She has resumed living life to the fullest and enjoying every day to the max. She relaxes with yoga and tai chi and has replaced the fast-paced business world with some rewarding volunteer work. She feels blessed to be able to spend time and help her mom and **Aunt Donna**, who share an apartment. Kathy treasures the time she has in retirement to read, attend Mass, and take multiple walks with her dogs. She enjoys connecting with all her close friends who refused to let her wallow in her grief and fear for too long. She feels healthy and alive and is looking forward to this coming Spring when she begins construction on her new home, which will be built on the site of her present one. Meanwhile, fingers crossed for a mild winter so Kathy can continue to drive her hot rod as long as possible. After all, Challenger Hellcats belong on the road, not in a garage! ♡

Suggested Resolutions for 2021

- ✚ Buy new clothes big enough to account for next year's holidays.
- ✚ Sign up for a marathon that I bravely will not actually run.
- ✚ Unfollow all the Kardashians but continue to keep up.
- ✚ Remember to make overnight oats the night before, even though I know I won't want to eat them in the morning.
- ✚ Buy all leftover 2020 calendars and burn them.
- ✚ Go outside. Among people.
- ✚ Start buying lottery tickets at a luckier store.
- ✚ Turn all my high heel shoes into flats.
- ✚ Never take HomeGoods trips for granted ever again.
- ✚ Do so much yoga that it actually justifies wearing yoga pants 24/7.
- ✚ Come to terms with the fact that John Mayer is in his 40s.
- ✚ Stay in the bathroom while I brush my teeth.
- ✚ Stop drinking orange juice after I've brushed my teeth.
- ✚ Floss every day — and not just with wild abandon in the week leading up to a cleaning.
- ✚ Actually put on a full outfit for Zoom calls (although, business-on-top-PJs-below never hurt anyone).
- ✚ Stop making resolutions.





A LITTLE COVID HUMOR

By Terrie Karebien

- ❖ When all this is over (really over), I say we throw a huge party! Decorate for Christmas and eat Thanksgiving dinner, hunt for Easter eggs dressed in Halloween costumes, exchange belated birthday gifts and set off 4th of July fireworks.
- ❖ My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 pounds. Only have 14 to go.
- ❖ A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
- ❖ Senility has been a smooth transition for me.



HAPPY SURVIVORSary!

Hedwig George	29 years!
Molly Goodman	25
Jen Poore	25
Elaine Greenberg	21
Patty Kurpinski	13
Nancy Evanson	9
Janice Murphy	6
Nancy Nordlie	6
Barb Wenninger	6
Alyson Denyer	5
Kathleen Gleissner	4

If your SURVIVORSary is missing, we did not receive an updated form from you.

Please contact Marilyn Brozovic via email: brozovicm87@gmail.com

Newsletter information is presented in summary form, is general in nature and provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Through adversity, not only are we given opportunity to discover our inner strength, we are also given the gift of foresight so we can shine a light for others who go through the experience after us.

— Rachael Bermingham —

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Please join us for our ZOOM meetings at 4:30 pm on the second and fourth Thursdays each month.

*** January 14 ***

Meet and greet with Dr. Barry Rosen and Dr. Zaid Al-Wahab. Both are gynecology oncologists affiliated with Beaumont in Royal Oak, Troy, Dearborn and Grosse Pointe.

*** January 28 ***

Speaker:
Jenn Nagy from
The American Cancer Society.

*** February 11 and 25 ***

*** March 11 and 25 ***

An email will be sent to everyone four days prior to each video support group meeting asking if you would like to participate. A separate email with a link will be sent to those who reply one day prior to the meeting.

Objectives of support group:

- ✦ Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;
- ✦ Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;
- ✦ Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;
- ✦ Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.