

## Preface & Disclaimer

When did stress first appear in my life? After all, isn't that what cancer is? A form of stress that has been building up in your body for who knows how long and eventually those tiny cells breaking tradition and, no longer feeling their way into my world, into my body, but now realising that they could become aggressive and enjoy playing havoc with the tissues surrounding them.

Was it

when I was protected inside the womb and yet could hear and feel what was going on around me in the outside world?

Was it

when I was struggling to keep my head in the correct position as I was pushed through the narrow canal of my mother's body as she gave birth to me?

Was it

when I first breathed air through my own lungs because of a slap on my behind by the first man in my life besides my father?

Was it

when I took my first toddler steps –  
the constant falling and picking  
myself up again?

Was it

when I was learning to speak and to  
learn about my environment?

Was it

living through my parents divorce?

Was it

when my father placed his two  
precious daughters in the hands of a  
stepmother who hated us simply  
because of who our natural mother  
was?

Was it

growing through those traumatic years until I was old enough to leave home?

Was it

the first day at my new job?

Was it

being married at an early age?

Was it

when I was giving birth to my own child?

Was it

realising that I was too young and immature for this experience?

Was it

going through my own separation and eventual divorce and crying my way through the entire proceedings and the Judge asking me very kindly – “Mrs Montgomery, do you really want to get divorced today?”

Was it

when I was on my own for seven years, struggling with my own entrepreneurial activities in order to feed me and my three littlies?

Was it

when I found a new man in my life who might take us on as his own?

Was it

because of the rate of growth of the lump pinpointed to when we left Tonga after our two week Temple service?

There are many nights that I lie in my bed wondering just when did all of this start?

Thankfully, I had a mammogram scheduled in February 2020 according to my medical calculations of the past, however, the actual appointment letter arrived in October 2019 informing me of the 6 November 2019 date. I questioned this so seriously – they are not the most comfortable tests to

undergo and who wants one earlier than you should have it? The ironic thing is that one of my dear friends approached me in November to tell me she had found an abnormality in her breast and what did I advise? Naturally I told her she must seek medical aide, however, I remember our conversation that day so clearly – “If you are not able to get an appointment for a mammogram quickly, then take my appointment and I will apply for one for when mine is due in February!”

Fortunately for me, she got her own letter a couple of days before mine,

therefore I kept my own appointment.

I remember sitting in the waiting room writing a story of what I was doing right at that very moment – waiting for my bi-annual mammogram brought forward by several months.

Three working days later I got a surprise phone call from the Breast cancer laboratory in Nelson to ask me if I could come to them the next day to get a do-over as it appeared that my mammogram didn't appear normal.



And all I could think was, “What on earth is Keith going to say?”

I rang him and asked him if he was working the next day. He wasn't sure so went to ask and came back to me to say that they hadn't made up the rosters yet. And me replying, “Well, I have to go to Nelson to get a re-do of my mammogram because last weeks results didn't appear to be normal to them.” To which he replied, “Well I won't be going to work will I?”

You don't know the relief I felt when I heard those words because we had a friend whose husband

would not let her have the mammogram and naturally after all the treatments she could get, she still passed away because it spread through her body quickly from that initial diagnosis.

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Watch out for more from me in other areas.

As usual, my email address for your ideas for book titles, correspondence, criticisms or just some love from you is [stories4debbie@gmail.com](mailto:stories4debbie@gmail.com).

Kindest regards

Debbie Nicholson

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