

# I'm Thankful I'm Still on the Course.

*Par 4, No Bogeys*

*Life with Cancer*

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What if you were diagnosed with cancer? You'd be thankful just to get through it and survive, right? Well, what if you had cancer 4 times? What would be your thoughts? Could you still be thankful? I mean, who beats cancer four times?

When I recently got news of my 4<sup>th</sup> cancer diagnosis, all I could think of was "how on earth can I go through this again? Why can't I just beat this?" Consumed by thoughts of my family, and not being with them, I couldn't be thankful for anything. Here I am, desperately trying to reach my children's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday like it's the 18<sup>th</sup> hole of a golf course, and it feels like I've just been disqualified at the 8<sup>th</sup> hole, ten years too early.



I was filled with anger. My body had let me down yet one more time. I suddenly began to doubt my usual unshakable optimism and think there was nothing left to be thankful for. And then I felt like a hypocrite. I've just spent most of September telling audiences across the Tri-Cities how to be, not just a survivor, but a Thriver: to make everyday precious and never quit, even when you're in the bunker in a force 10 gale. Be thankful for what you have today, not what may come tomorrow.

But all of us, when pushed to the limit, can lose hope, drive, and stop being thankful for what we have. Fighting cancer consumes all your strength, and fighting chronic cancer consumes your life. How can you aim for the green when all you see are the 4 big trees you've already hit?

So this Thanksgiving, I'm desperately trying not to get blown off course. I am thankful that my cancer has been caught early again; that there are still treatment choices; that I kept going to the gym - when I really didn't want to - and that I have loving, supportive family and friends. If I need more confirmation that I'm not quite dying yet, I just think of the wonderful 5 time cancer survivor, and spunky eighty-something-year-old lady, that I'm honored to call one of my best friends. So like Cathy, I'm thankful that I can say "I'm living with it, not dying from it."

Cancer takes an awful lot of courage. As survivors, we're told it every day, although most of us brush off the compliment with embarrassment. What's even harder though is still being thankful for the change in life that it brings. So yes, I'm squaring up to cancer yet again, but hopefully I've got my swing right this time. I'm reaching for the most aggressive club in my caddy and hitting the ball to heaven and back. I'm aiming for a par four, with definitely no bogeys this time. And the fact that I still believe I can do it, is what I'm thankful for most of all.

*Kay Kerbyson is Founder/President of Ovarian Cancer Together Inc., a local and national non-profit supporting and networking women with ovarian cancer. Local resources, support and education materials, for those effected by ovarian cancer in Washington state, can be found at [www.ovariancancertogether.org](http://www.ovariancancertogether.org) or by contacting Kay at [Kay@ovariancancertogether.org](mailto:Kay@ovariancancertogether.org)*