



Keeping Family in Mind: A Cancer Survivor's Advice for Experts

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Lou Lanza:

My hope is to survive more, of course, and be involved with these different groups so find and raise money. I'm also involved with some organizations for runs and everything. I volunteer my time there. Very rewarding, because when I give out stuff for runs and different charitable organizations, I introduce myself as a survivor, so they can put a face to what they're doing, why they're donating their time, why they're donating their money. So that makes me feel good and also them.

When I was getting out of my treatment, my last—I was a week in the cardiac unit and a week in the oncology unit. And around Christmastime, I take pictures of my children, and I had pictures of my children on the Christmas card. And all the doctors and the interns came over, and I said, "I just want you to stop for a second. I know you are busy, but I just want you to look at that board there. That's a picture of my family." I said, "You're not just treating me. You're helping me get back to my family." I said, "All you doctors are doing great things, and you medical students are going to learn a lot from them. I want to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart."

Every one, doctor an intern, got a little emotional when I said that. They came back and thanked me for saying that. And I tell people, I said—and I always talk to my oncologist whenever I see her. I say, "Doctor, I'm Italian. I need a hug." And she says, "Sometimes doctors need hugs, too." So it's important to me to get the word out to the doctors. We're not just people. You're treating my family. You're not just treating me.

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