

My name is Barb. I am a wife, a mother and as of February 2011, a 12 year survivor of ovarian cancer. I remember waking up from surgery and my doctor telling me “the tumor was malignant”. Several words came to mind...disbelief, shock and fear. Fear I wouldn't live to see my children



grow up. Fear of the chemo I would have to take. Fear of suffering. Fear of dying. Fear of the unknown. Then I made a decision. I had to do whatever it took to survive. It would test my body, mind, heart and spirit. I also knew I could not do this alone. As it turned out, I wasn't alone. My family was wonderfully supportive. My friends and co-workers brought food, sent cards, took me wig shopping. We celebrated each small victory. Even the family dog kept watch over me after each chemo session. Treatment was difficult, but not nearly as bad as I had feared. And when it was over, I felt a sense of pride and new strength that I never knew I possessed. I took a

trip to Glacier National Park. I marveled with new appreciation of Nature's beauty...the mountains, alpine lakes, trees, blue sky and fresh air. I then felt an overwhelming need to “pay this forward”. I visited other newly diagnosed cancer patients at my hospital now that I was on the other side of the battle. In turn, they gave my life a new purpose.

Now the words that come to my mind are joy, strength, love and gratitude. I am connected to life like never before. Walking my daughter down the aisle at her wedding with my husband was a huge milestone. My son graduating with his master's degree is another. My husband and I just celebrated 32 years of marriage. The future is filled with hope.

*My favorite quote is “The most beautiful stones have been tossed by the wind and washed by the water and polished to brilliance by life's strongest storms.”*