

Judy

Judy, my beautiful, beautiful friend. I met Judy through my significant other. A group of us played each week then stopped for a bite to eat afterwards. It was great fun and we all bonded which made it even more so.

Judy was so welcoming and easy to be with, she had an aura about her that pulled you in and held you close, loving you just the way you were, no judgments. She loved large and family was her focus, she would gather her four children and grandchildren around her table and they'd play games late into the night, laughing and loving being together, she was a force of nature and loved fiercely.

Judy's life changed the day she went to see the doctor regarding a cough she couldn't shake. An x-ray was taken, the results showed a tumor in the lower lobe of her right lung. Surgery was performed, the tumor removed and a course of chemotherapy followed. Judy recovered and was given the all clear signal, she could move on with her life.

Approximately a year later, facing another set of x-rays, Judy was looking at "infiltration", a term for what looks like snowflakes scattered across the x-ray image. this time, in both lungs.

Judy's brother is a pulmonary specialist and when she asked him if this was a death sentence he said "no" but how could he know for sure or was he trying to get her through to the following Monday when they would do a biopsy? The biopsy confirmed it was cancer and Judy's brother said in all his years of practice he had seen only twelve cases of this type of cancer.

I was rendered helpless with fear and worried about the enormity of the consequences of her condition. I was afraid for her spirit, she had so much love that flowed freely from her but she also needed replenishment, to sink down into the well of the love and support that surrounded her and let it renew her strength for the battle ahead.

She was brave but so vulnerable and at the end of the day she was alone. I worried about the down times, the alone times when the questions loomed larger than they were because it was dark and night had descended and the cold of January gripped the air.

I worried and was looking for reassurance from Judy that she would be alright so I could be alright as well. Isn't that our nature? We don't want the bad news; we want to relive yesterday or last week before we knew, before the shadow crossed the image on the x-ray.

Loss is excruciating, we grow to love then suffer loss, and although we know in our minds that mortality is the end stage of life, our hearts are slow to understand.

Judy was special, she loved large and freely, she gathered you in and held you close, she was as rare as the cancer that invaded her lungs. She did not go quietly into that dark night, no, she founded "A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation" as well as "The Twin Cities Lung Walk" in Minnesota. Judy passed on December 26, 2009.

Diana Carter

538 words

