

As my husband grew more ill, I felt almost powerless. At times, it felt like I had lost control over my life and I didn't know how to get it back. But when the worst happened, I decided enough was enough – I was going to take back the control; because education is power.

My husband had been sick for a long time. We knew the day would come when his liver would quit on him, but we were hoping he would get a transplant before it completely gave out. In 2013, after years of fighting Hepatitis C, he took a turn for the worse from a raging infection thru his body. The infection after months of antibiotics became under control but his body couldn't handle it any longer; he passed away early the following year. I was devastated, but my family was there for me through it all. My two young sons handled their fathers' passing much better than I did. They're wise beyond their years and were able to understand the realities of the world from a young age.

After taking care of my husband for years and watching his body deteriorate before our eyes, I turned to taking care of my own body. We've always been a healthy family, but I needed to feel like I had control of someone's health. A few years earlier, I had found a lump in my breast. I went to the doctor to have it checked out, but they assured me it was just scar tissue. Reluctantly, I listened, and put off the concern. But when my husband died, I knew I needed to have that lump checked out again. I went back to the doctor and made it clear that I wanted it out. The surgeon heard me out and they performed a lumpectomy to remove it. A week later I got a phone call to schedule an MRI; the doctors had found something else. I went back in and they told me that not only was the lump cancerous, but there was more. I wasn't surprised when she told me the news – I knew it was cancer all along. I learned a very important lesson that day – If I don't speak up and be an advocate for myself, no one will.

Then I thought of my sons – I wanted to be an advocate for them too. My youngest son has always been a little different. He is a brilliant child, but he's always struggled in social situations. After years of hesitation, I finally pushed to get him assessed at our hospital. What the doctors used to think was just ADHD or learning disabilities, we now know is Asperger's. He was officially diagnosed and can finally get the help he needs. I was afraid of a diagnosis at first. I didn't want to put a label on him or make him feel like he is "less." But I knew that an official understanding would put him in a position to receive the care and help he needs at school. Now he is thriving at school and doing better than before. His teachers have more understanding and patience with him, and he has more patience with himself, as do I.

Through all the twists and turns in my life, I've become increasingly more aware of the power that comes from knowledge. We can't afford to go through this life blindly. I took it upon myself to always be as educated as I can be about the things I'm going through. Whether that's battling illness or selling a home. Education is so important to me. In my mind, to stop learning is to stop growing. Challenging myself to learn about breast cancer and spot early signs saved my life. Learning about the varying degrees on the autism spectrum allowed me to be an advocate for my son and get him the support he needs. I've carried this love for learning right into my real estate career, too. I want to help you take control of the biggest financial transaction in your life because buying or selling a home is no small thing. I will teach you all you need to know throughout this process and be with you every step of the way.