

No Time to Go it Alone

Now's the Time to Find Your Squad

Written By: Cara Lockwood
Breast Cancer Survivor & Best-Selling Author

I've always prided myself on being a plucky and independent person.

This is probably because I was a single mom of two daughters for nine years. I also wrote 40 novels, hit the USA Today bestseller list, had a book turned into a Lifetime Original Movie, wrote an adaptation for Hallmark, and, oh, yes, put together a whole apartment's worth of Ikea furniture. By myself.

Cancer is a Team Sport

When cancer comes calling, though, it's no time for pretending you can go it alone. It's time to find your squad.

Asking for help has always been hard for me. I think it's because I just don't want to impose, and I never want to be a bother. Plus, if I ask for help, then maybe everyone will realize I've just been winging it this whole time and I never actually knew what I was doing (imposter syndrome, much?).

Then, I got diagnosed with breast cancer in 2023 at the age of 50.

I considered keeping it all a secret and trying to handle it myself, but then I realized there's no medal for suffering in silence. There's no trophy for going to appointments alone, or white-knuckling it solo through chemotherapy.

I'd been so used to trying not to be a bother most of my life that I'd forgotten that life, actually, is a team sport.

Who's Your Squad?

You need a squad. Your squad can be your spouse, your siblings, your best friends. They can be the women you meet in community support groups. They can be your neighbors or coworkers. They're the people who genuinely wish you well, who want to help you – not just because they can write a virtue-signaling post about it, but because they absolutely care.

Toxic people aren't allowed in the squad. You've only got room in your life for one narcissistic jerk at a time, and right now, that's cancer.

For me, my squad was a select few ride-or-die friends, my family, and my amazing spouse, PJ.

Your Appointment Buddy

PJ came with me to every medical appointment, thank goodness. I told him this wasn't necessary at first (because if I can't handle everything, maybe I can't handle anything? There's that imposter syndrome again).

I was so glad he insisted on coming. Anytime I walked into a doctor's office my blood pressure sky-rocketed and I instantly shifted into fight-or-flight mode. Because I was so busy looking for ways to escape out of that exam room, I probably heard about every third word the doctor said.

Even when I was listening, I didn't understand half the medical jargon. Having cancer is a lot like stumbling onto the set of *Grey's Anatomy*, except there are no hot doctors. Just complicated medical terms and bad fluorescent lighting.

Bearing Witness in the Highs and Lows

PJ and my squad helped me through the doctors' appointments. My friends brought me dinners after surgery. They sent me care packages. They let me know I wasn't forgotten. Most importantly, they bore witness. When we're going through something terrible, we can draw comfort just from having someone on the journey with us, a person you can turn to and say, "Wasn't that awful?" and they nod and agree it was the absolute worst.

That's why rollercoaster cars have two seats, not one. If we're plummeting down a stomach-dropping ridge or twisting upside down, we want a companion we can look to and see if they're as terrified as we are.



Helper’s High

And what I learned, too, is that I wasn’t being a bother at all. People wanted to help. I even discovered that there’s something psychologists call the “helper’s high.” People feel good when they do good for others, and it can help them be healthier and live longer.*

So, you’re not taking without giving in return, actually. Your friends want to help you, and they feel better when they do it. Don’t cheat them of this chance.

There’s nothing good about Big ‘C’ Cancer, but if there’s a silver lining, it’s the realization that making connections with people, or deepening friendships with others might just be why we’re here. Leaning on your friends isn’t a burden, after all. It’s a blessing.

It shows us all how we’re connected, about how we’re stronger together than we are apart. Doing good makes us feel good, and it reinforces all the strong bonds we’ve made in our lives, from the old ones to the new. It reminds you that love is the strongest force in the universe, and that we all need it, as much as the air we breathe. ^(B)



SOCIAL *Survivors*

Social Survivors is a monthly gathering where cancer survivors at any stage after diagnosis, come together for community, connection, and education. Offered in person and online, attendees hear from experts in genetics, nutrition, mental health, art therapy, skincare, exercise, and more.

➤➤ **JOIN US ONE THURSDAY A MONTH FROM 6:30 to 8:30 PM IN DALLAS OR VIRTUALLY**



Author's Bio

Cara Lockwood is a breast cancer survivor and the USA Today bestselling rom-com author of 40 books, including *I Do (But I Don't)*, which was made into a Lifetime Original Movie. Her newest book, *There's No Good Book For This But I Wrote One Anyway: The Irreverent Guide to Crushing Breast Cancer* is available October 1st, 2025. Half of the proceeds benefit Susan G Komen and the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Also, for every book purchased, another is donated to a patient in care.



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References on Page 55



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