



Trish O'Keeffe

In 1998 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was 38 years old and my 6 year old son was in first grade at school.

I was the first in my family to experience cancer of any form so I needed to rely on friends and strangers to guide me through this. Medical staff, friends, and most particularly my family, made the trip through surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy less scary than I had imagined.

I celebrated my first year anniversary by completing Ironman Canada. Beating cancer and completing Ironman makes you believe



that you can beat anything. In 2001 I was again diagnosed with breast cancer. Luck was on my side this time as it was detected quite early and surgery was the only treatment I needed. It is never far from my mind though that it can come back.

In spite of it, or more likely because of it – I live every moment for all it is worth. I am a 3 time Ironman finisher, 2 time RAAM finisher (team event), countless 70.3 races and I completed the Canadian Ski Marathon last winter. These things make me feel alive. Watching my son throw a touchdown pass or sink a 3 pointer make me feel alive. Cheering on my 79 year old mother who did the 60km cancer walk make me feel alive.

If I can borrow the words of a fellow cancer survivor, “It’s one thing to live, but it’s another thing to live strong, to attack the day and attack your life with a whole new attitude. This was a gift for me. I guess before the illness I just lived. Now, after the illness, I live strong.”

Riding with Lance Armstrong makes me feel alive.

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