

## Patient Spotlight: Barbara Hines

Pathfinders National Council member and current cancer patient, Barbara Hines, discusses her personal experiences with cancer in an interview with Pathfinders Founder, Tina Staley.

TINA: For all of us, our lives play out as a tapestry of stories. This is equally true of cancer patients and people without cancer, long-term survivors and people nearing the end of life. Much of what we value about ourselves, and what we want to leave behind us, are our stories. Barbara could you tell us your cancer story?

BARBARA: We found that I had cancer through a routine mammogram. My doctor in Aspen ordered a biopsy, which didn't show anything. Fortunately, he pressed me to have another biopsy, and this time it came in positive.

T: What went on within you, when you found out that you had cancer?

B: I think you go through stages, like in grieving. First, there's surprise and disbelief. I thought, "I'm so healthy... how could I have cancer?!" Then I got on the phone to let all of my friends know. You stay so busy, informing everyone all along the way, that you don't have much time to think about it. I'm very positive, and I refuse to dwell on the downside of things. So I just took it one step at a time, and got on with everything else I'm involved in. Both of my children flew in, and my husband was here, to support me through it.

T: Did you change anything, while you were in treatment?

B: Well, everyone told me to rest, relax, and not do anything. During chemotherapy, I tried to follow this advice, but then all the side effects hit me. So I started doing everything again, and I didn't notice the symptoms as much. I did start going to bed at 9:00



instead of 11:00, so I guess I was a bit more tired.

T: What about the treatment path – did you consider alternatives to chemotherapy?

B: Yes, I initially chose an alternative provider, and my daughter and son-in-law planned to come stay with me during my care. But then I listened to my inner

feelings, and something didn't feel quite right. My family and I decided to go with the top-notch medical care we have right here in Houston at MD Anderson. I also had a round of acupuncture when I was in London. And one thing that I do want to recommend to other women is lymphatic drainage. This was very, very important to my recovery and something that many cancer patients don't even know about.

T: Did you make any lifestyle changes, during your treatment and recovery?

B: Well, my diet hadn't been exemplary, so I've tried to add more vegetables and fruits. Lou Lou, a Parisian chef who works for me, has come up with some wonderful vegetable recipes

T: In looking back, how do you feel now about your journey through cancer?

B: Today, if I had to choose between not having the cancer, or having the cancer and gaining all the blessings that have come through it, I would choose the cancer. I've had so many new experiences, and made so many new friends... I think that cancer brings to us a great many gifts and opportunities for growth – for ourselves, our families and everyone around us – and I'm thankful for that!