Take it Easy: Advice From My Sister

September 23, 2016 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog.

When my bottom lip sticks out and tears spill, I'll simply write the word "cry". In July of 2014 an ultrasound picked up on cancer trying to take over my liver. My mind scattered out looking for advice. You know, really smart advice that encouraged me during the tumor shrinking, flipping out times. I found it in many places, however, most of my communication was limited to family at first. My sibling group began to play magnet with me. They offered advice, emailed articles, and showed up on my porch at odd hours with fresh vegetables. They stuck by me like… well, magnets. The supply of love, support, and advice was endless. I was the oldest girl and the bossy one who had always given advice freely. They called me Marcia! Marcia! Marcia! growing up. Well, why don't I just introduce you to my siblings.

My Band of Siblings

Michael Dale is the only boy AND the oldest. He introduced us to loud rock music, fast cars, and firecrackers. Yes, I still use first and middle names when referring to them. So my over 6 ft and over 60 year old brother is still Michael Dale. He called me Miss Daisy during the cancer and transplant period. cry Newly retired, he became my chauffeur on trips to everywhere from the city dump when I cleaned out "those boxes" to Oklahoma City for a Tace procedure. He has a sly sense of humor and knew how to draw out a smile every time. He made sure I fasted for blood labs, and then fed me when I was starving. He saw me at my slobbering worst and loved me so well. His advice remained the same throughout: Slow down. What's your hurry?

Lisa Adele is our baby. The youngest of us three girls. A gentle, funny, and dignified teacher, she's also our number 1 cook. Talented, caring, serving, and loving to learn new things; there is nothing that woman can't do. She grows blackberries, and then makes a homemade cobbler before you can turn around twice. A loving mother and grandma, her granddaughter rolls the dough better than most. Under her softness is enormous strength. While listening to the oncologist, she made 3 pages of notes. cry Then she took pictures of the notes and sent them to our sibling group.Her advice was: Listen to your doctors and do what they say.

Jammie Lynn is our middle child. cry. She's always been in the middle of everything we did. Like glue, she kept our sibling band close. It was from that place of being in the middle that her greatest gifts were born. She listened well. She knew what you needed before you needed it. She

found solutions before you knew there was a problem. She saw life in a realistic, practical ways. Her advice was: Take it easy.

Fear Strikes Home

One of her co-workers died post liver transplant. We all knew this teacher, and took her death hard. Jammie took it really hard. Honestly, now that I'm writing this, she began giving constant advice after that. cry She got bossy and panicky the last 2 years. cry She kept on me to stay in bed. Let others help. Don't jump back into work. Sleep late. Eat more. Trust God. I listened.

A few weeks ago, our sibling group had a loss. Jammie Lynn went before us. cry Our little band is now made up of just three. We all believe in an eternity where she is waiting for us.I've personally given her angelic qualities; I believe that she is still whispering in my ear to Take it easy.

Click here to read the rest of Karen's tribute to the love and support of siblings.

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