

Speaker 1 ([00:20](#)):

Hi there. My name is Paula McClean, and I'm delighted to guest host this episode of More Than the Lump for Aisling. Back in season one, I came into the studio to tell my story about being diagnosed with stage two invasive breast cancer at the age of just 42. I spoke to Aisling about the decision at the time to have the lump that I found just before a friend's wedding with my three young girls checked out. I talked about my subsequent treatment journey and the impact of my family, including my husband and my three lovely girls. During the course of that particular episode, I touched on an emotional scars that remained me to this day, over 11 years later. And so when Aisling asked me to come back in to host an episode with other women who have traveled this road, and to talk a little bit more about the psychological impact I couldn't refuse.

[\(01:06\)](#):

If by sharing my experience can help other women to feel they're not alone in their fears, then I'm more than happy to be involved. To be diagnosed with breast cancer is traumatic. It brings worries and anxieties that to be honest, women who haven't been impacted simply never know or fully understand. In this episode, I hope to unravel some of those psychological issues, to unpack them and talk openly and honestly about how it feels, our worries and our anxieties. I'm absolutely delighted to be joined for this discussion by Lisa Cony, a fellow breast cancer survivor, who I met many years ago in a boxing ring in Bray County, Wicklow. It was a boxing ring. And we were there for the totally fabulous Katie Taylor, who was lending her support to breast cancer Ireland at the time, as part of a launch of a self-check video, encouraging women to lend their hands to protect them. We had a great day, Lisa, didn't we? Oh, we

Speaker 2 ([02:02](#)):

Did fantastic tea.

Speaker 1 ([02:04](#)):

An experience. It was so much fun. We were joined by the ever vivacious an elbow, and our beloved Emma Hannigan, who sadly passed away in 2018. We all still miss Emma in her lives, but it was always good to remember Emma and her fun, her laughter, and the ment we all had when we met up, isn't it? Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([02:24](#)):

Good

Speaker 1 ([02:25](#)):

One. We had a good laugh that day for sure. Also, joining me today in studio is Lynn Buckley. He was diagnosed in 2017, like myself. And Lisa Lynn is a mom, a wife, a daughter, a friend, a work colleague, and she has much to say about navigating our collective way through this disease. Ladies, you are both very welcome. Thank you. Thanks, Paul. I'm gonna start with you, Lynn because while we only met each other this morning for a lovely coffee your diagnosis is the most recent. Lynn, would you mind taking us through your story and how you found out you had breast

Speaker 3 ([03:00](#)):

Cancer? I will indeed. Thanks Paula. So I'm, I was living in silences. I was 33 years old at the time. I found a lump in my left breast, and I, at the time, I had two little girls. One was coming up on three, one was

coming up on one, and I was 16 weeks pregnant as well. So I brought the lump to my pregnancy consultant, and he referred me on thinking, okay, maybe this is just a cyst. The following week I had an appointment and was straight in for a mammogram and an ultrasound. So afterwards they did a biopsy and I had to wait three days to get the results. And those three days were the worst three days ever. I went back to work as a teacher and put my head down, and just got through the next couple of days knowing I had breast cancer, and went back on the Friday to be told I had stage one breast cancer.

(03:54):

The following week I had a lumpectomy and lymph gland clearance. And the results of that came back that I actually had a tumor in my lymph gland as well. So it put me to stage three, and the cancer was triple negative, so quite aggressive breast cancer. I started chemo a couple of weeks later all the while pregnant, and I did half my chemo pregnant, stopped, had a break of two weeks to get my bloods right, so I could deliver my baby boy Adam. And two weeks later, he was delivered at 36 weeks. And two weeks later I was back to chemo. I did another 10 weeks of chemo, and I needed more surgery because my, my, the me lumpectomy didn't clear margins. So I had another three surgeries to try and clear margins, and I ended up needing a mastectomy.

(04:46):

After that, then I had five weeks of radium. And that kind of finished the initial treatment. I did a lot of gene genetic testing as well. They all came back negative, but I made the decision to have a full hysterectomy done again as a, sorry, precaution. Precaution, again, as a precaution. You know, do that sentence again, made the decision. So yeah, we're speaking to some consultants and getting advice from them. I decided to go and have a full hysterectomy done again to reduce more risk. So at the moment in currently five years, it's cancer free as a last week and doing well so far, thank God, <laugh>

Speaker 1 (05:26):

Lynn. That's amazing. Yeah, Lynn, I'm, I'm sitting here listening to your story, and every piece of me is like, you've been through so much. Yeah. And you're incredibly brave, and you're amazing. And Oh, thanks, <laugh> pregnant. You're very pregnant.

Speaker 3 (05:40):

Gorgeous, baby. Oh, it was a frightening, an absolutely frightening time. Just worried so much for him and for his health. And even to the day he was born, he was whipped off for Cord Bloods, and he was in Neo for a while, and he ended up getting jaundice and, you know, just still, he's near, he's five. He's five now. And he, it still bothers me that something is gonna happen to him and it'll be my fault. Cause I had chemo, you know? But he's perfectly healthy, you know, he's great. A great kid

Speaker 1 (06:09):

To me. Lynn, you are a superhero. Ah, <laugh>. I, I

Speaker 2 (06:12):

Mean, amazing.

Speaker 1 (06:12):

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I, I've, I've been through my own story and it's absolutely, what you've been through is unbelievable. Like, a couple of things you've touched on there, like those few days when you're waiting for that diagnosis, that is so difficult. I know. That's the difficult part, but you were pregnant. Yeah. And so you were not only thinking about yourself Yeah. And your fear, but you were carrying this.

Speaker 3 ([06:36](#)):

And to be honest, I don't even think it was thinking about myself. It was thinking about the baby. I was pregnant with my two little girls at home and, you know, well, how am I gonna do this? How am I gonna have treatment? You know? And just it was an awful time, an awful worry.

Speaker 1 ([06:51](#)):

When you look back now, at that time, what, what, how did you think you got through it?

Speaker 3 ([06:57](#)):

I, I'm not sure to be honest. You know, I have an amazing husband that has just been there through everything. There's things he's helped me with and done for me that no husband should ever have to do with her, you know, to their wife, <laugh> you know, shave your head and under the likes of it. And I, he just put the head down on one foot in front of the other of my mom and dad were absolutely fantastic as well. And you know, friends gathered around and I think it just was in that I need to fight mode. And I think it was nearly easier on me just because I knew my path. Everyone else was scrambling around me with the worry of it, you know? Just, it was day by day <laugh> one, one foot in front of the other <laugh>.

Speaker 1 ([07:34](#)):

That's incredible. Lynn, so you're, you're, what is your little baby's name? You're five Adam now. Adam. Adam. So, and he's doing great. And you're delight.

Speaker 3 ([07:41](#)):

He's fantastic. Yeah. Yeah. No, he's great.

Speaker 1 ([07:43](#)):

That's fantastic. He's very happy.

Speaker 3 ([07:44](#)):

Thank

Speaker 1 ([07:45](#)):

God. How are you now?

Speaker 3 ([07:46](#)):

I'm good. I'm good. Still have regular checks, little hiccup, few hiccups along the way, but thank God I'm, I'm good. Yeah, I'm good. I don't think I'll ever stop worrying about the pain in your head or the pain in

your hip or, you know, any kind of symptoms or side effects. I don't think that'll ever go away, but as of this moment, I'm well <laugh>, so we'll take the little one, you know? Oh,

Speaker 1 ([08:07](#)):

I'm absolutely amazing. Amazing, Lynn. Thank you. Fantastic. Fantastic. And Lisa, you have an incredible story also to tell us.

Speaker 2 ([08:14](#)):

Yeah. as you know, we met 10 years ago. Yes. I'm 11 years now since my diagnosis like that I was 36 years old. I had lost my mom. She was 44, she passed away from breast cancer. So it was always something from the age of 17 that was part of my life, do you know? Right. But I'd put it to the, you know, the side and kind of, you know, got on with life. And so what happened with me was, I think I kind of, my brother got sick in 2009. He had gastric cancer. He was 39. And I think with going up and down to visit him and stuff in Galway, I just found that you know, I just wanted to be there for him. So between that and the three kids, and with work, I probably should have noticed that, you know, I was getting pains in my right breast and stuff like that.

([09:13](#)):

But I kind of put it to the back burner. Anytime I would've gone to the doctor, you know, it would've been maybe you're just anxious because your mom or your brother. And, but anyway, it came to show that I was on the 7th of March, 2011 I was driving out home and that was the date of my mom's anniversary. And I just got this sharp pain in my breast and I said, look, I've had enough. I'm going back to the doctor with this. So I went back to the doctor and they said, oh, do you know, I think you're being a little bit anxious, we will refer you because of the family history, but maybe you're a little bit anxious. So they sent me home with something just to relax me. And that was fine. I was seen seven weeks later in Galway.

([10:00](#)):

And the person I met, the doctor I met up there, they did a mammogram, which was clear. So they brought me in to sit down and talk to me. She checked me and said, you're a young woman, up you go, you're fine. Do you know what I mean? Don't be worrying. And they said, we're gonna send you down for an ultrasound just in case. Do you know, cause of the family history. So I dunno what happened. And I dunno who spotted what that day, but I got as far as to got a phone call to go over to Merlin Park to have an mri. And that MRI showed up two tumors in my right breast. So it was like all systems go from then. They did a biopsy. They checked my nodes. It was all, there was all a few days in between of worry, the three kids were at home.

([10:52](#)):

I'm not a person that can kind of hide my, they had said, you know, go out, sit in the car, you have breast cancer, do you know, turn off your phone, don't talk to anybody, do you know unless you feel ready. But of course, when I went home, my, my 10 year old Caitlyn, my middle child met me in the bathroom and she goes, mom, there's something going on. I can feel it. And so, like they said, if they ask, tell them. So I told her. And that was fine. It was straight into, it was in my lymph nodes and everything, so it was straight into four months of chemo like that, losing the hair. And my son took that very bad. My son's teacher that year, actually Ethan was six, come nine, seven at the time. It was seven coming on seven.

([11:39](#)):

Yeah, I think. Sorry. Now it's just a long not at all. And she said she never seen a child to change as much Oh as him that year. So for me, to be honest with you, what got me through everything was my husband, my kids. I didn't have my mom, my dad was very sick at the time as well. So I used to have chemo and then go home to dad, shower him. Eventually Dad had to go into a nursing home. But anyway, beyond that I was still in treatment, met great friends through treatment, lost great friends through treatment. And we used to use our chemo day as a dress up day. So we'd go in, done up to the nines, <laugh>, I love it. So I'd gone in, but like, you'd be fabulous. You'd have your makeup on and everything.

[\(12:22\)](#):

And then 10 minutes later, you were great. <Laugh>, you were just like, oh god. But look, it was, it was, I was going to say it was great. It wasn't great, but like we made great to a camaraderie shift, bad situation. And anyway, that was done. We had our little tips of when you're going for chemo, where your gloves and everything was cold so you wouldn't be sent away. They'd get your bloods and the whole shebang. So that was fine. So then after I had the chemo, they checked the tumors. I had a moderate response to chemo and it was still in my lymph nodes. So I had to have a radical mastectomy and my lymph nodes removed and I had immediate lacy reconstruction. For me, that was important. I didn't want an implant. Everyone's stories different. My story was that at 17 I used to go up and down on the train with my mom to St.

[\(13:12\)](#):

Luke's and she had a mastectomy. And to me, this is years and years ago, things have moved on. Yeah. But that was the scare I had in my head. Yeah. So I wanted the immediate reconstruction if they could. Once the tumors were gone, that's all I wanted. So that took a while to recover. All the while I just wanted to bring the kids away, want to bring the kids away. The kids wanted to make life cuz I thought, cause mom and Patrick 44 and 39 had passed that I was going to be next. And I was just going, I'm not ready. I love you, but I'm not ready to meet you. And that's that. So that was fine. Then. it took me a while to recover from that. That was a long surgery. Painful. I remember my friend and my sister-in-law just sitting on the chair beside me at home and the pillows propped up and, but you know, something, I forget that pain now.

[\(14:03\)](#):

At the time it was the worst thing in the world. Now I'm like, it's like when you have your baby check <laugh>, like, you know, three different births, but traumatic, a couple of them, but like, you forget it when you hold out. So I kind of let that, you know, go. Then it was into radiotherapy. My husband was with me all the way with, we used to make sandwiches on the top of the car and belline <laugh> and then come back and pick the kids up from school. And it was just to be back in time to pick them up from school. I used to work my radiotherapy appointments around that. So that was my year of active treatment. Then I had to have the genetic testing crumlin. So I got I, I said to them, look, I just couldn't do anymore.

[\(14:51\)](#):

I said, I can't go up and get the results. Can you please give me the results over the phone? When they rang to say, you know, we have your results. Can you come up? I said, I can take anything now at this stage. Just tell me. I'll never forget. I was standing upstairs in the bedroom and they told me I was BRCA one positive, so I couldn't have missed, you know, I was, it was, I was going to get breast cancer. So straight away they were on it. And I was brought in to have my woman ovaries removed and thankfully I had my three children at that stage. And they removed my woman ovaries. And then 12 weeks after that they did a mastectomy on my left breast. But my whole thing and what really broke my heart through

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the whole thing was that my daughters would've had to have to be tested. And the fact that I tested positive meant that all my family could get tested. So thankfully my sister was negative. My daughter, when she turned 18, got tested. She's negative. Fantastic. And my middle girl, Caitlin, who's 22 next week is negative as well.

Speaker 1 ([15:59](#)):

Oh, amazing.

Speaker 2 ([16:00](#)):

So Ethan was 18 a couple of weeks ago and he'll have to get tested eventually, but my children and my husband and my friends got me. Yeah. Family through a tough, tough, tough two years. Very, very tough. That stays with you and you're very different after it. But you're a good kind of different. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([16:18](#)):

Do you know, and Lisa, you know, you're listening to you and I know your story cuz you've told me it. Yeah. But you told me it 10 years ago. Yeah. And we met for a photo shoot with Katie Caler. I had never met you before and I suppose we were both in a very different place than we are now. We, we were diagnosed the same year. It was 2011.

Speaker 2 ([16:44](#)):

2011. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([16:46](#)):

And I remember driving you back to Dublin and we just had a connection. Yeah. And we cried and we talked and you've been on my mind all the time and we've kept in touch on social media and different stuff and talking to you now and it's 10 years later, how are you now? How, how do you feel now about looking back and all of that?

Speaker 2 ([17:10](#)):

Now I'm God very proud of myself. Yes. Very proud of my family. There's nothing you could throw at us now. I know the people that are with me now are real, my people

Speaker 1 ([17:22](#)):

Who

Speaker 2 ([17:22](#)):

Matter. Yeah. Do you know? And all I want now is for women that are going through, like, I wish I had me when I was going through, yes. I had people that I knew had gone on the journey before me, but I don't, they were brilliant. But I dunno how to word it. I just wish I could've heard meat and I would've known then I can get through anything because there was just a lot of little extras thrown in to get through that I didn't know the people that, it's amazing what a fighter you can be when you have no other option. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([18:00](#)):

I really do feel it's so important to tell the story because it makes somebody else's diagnosis and story a little bit less scary and a little bit. And you, you know, I remember actually for me, I didn't know anybody at the time except Kylie Min Oak <laugh>. I remember like googling her and looking at her and through her stages and going, okay, I can do this. And now I've met so many incredible people who have been through this journey and unbelievably brave women. And yeah. It's, you know, it's definitely a stronger place to be, but at the time I didn't. And I agree with you, it's so important to do it and it helps, helps other people so much. Yeah. today when, like when we talked to Kerryn talk <inaudible> and stuff, what we wanted to kind of talk about was, you're five years and you're 11 years and just where we are now in terms of how we feel.

([18:58](#)):

And I suppose from, personally from me, I mean very honest. For those few years after it, I lived in, in huge fear. You know. I think if I could have become best friends with my oncologist, I <laugh> I would've, you know, if I wanted, if I could have got into her every single day, I would've hung on every word that she said. I kind of wanted her to tell me that I was, you know, going to live to a very old person because somewhere in deep in my heart, I, I just wasn't so sure about that and my own thoughts. You know, get up in the middle of the night to, you know, go to bathroom, whatever at three or four o'clock in the morning and all the babies and sleep in the house and everything. And I used to, you know, wish that I would see them grow, get to see them grow up.

([19:47](#)):

Because you don't know that you don't. No, you don't. No, you don't. That, that self confidence that in your, in your body, in life just shifts, doesn't it? It changes. And 11 years later I, I'm a much stronger person and I'm, I feel very lucky and very grateful, but it still sits with me. I, I feel I am a different person in some ways. I wish more than anything it never happened. But in some other ways I feel it's like a superpower to a degree because I definitely don't sweat the small stuff. No. And if I do, I kind of take a step back a bit and I go, actually that's not actually you think important. That's not important. Yeah. And one thing I've thought about, you know, I do, some parts of it do make me really think about life. Would I be as strong as I am now if I hadn't been through it? Would my family be different with my relationships with my kids and family and everybody have been different. Probably there were those couple of years that I don't remember a huge amount of it because you're in survival mode really, even though the kids are so small and you're doing your best boxes Yeah. To look after

Speaker 3 ([21:03](#)):

It. And when you're in active treatment, you know, you kind of have treatment keeping you going. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, I remember finishing chemo and walking out the door bawling, crying like, I don't wanna leave you. And they're like, this is a good thing. Your chemo is finished.

Speaker 1 ([21:13](#)):

It's like in free fall.

Speaker 3 ([21:14](#)):

Yeah. And you're kind of put out. And then I remember finishing radium and I remember meeting a lovely lady that was finished as well and she said, my mother told me something when you're finished treatment. And this always stuck at me. She said, it's nearly like you come out of the tumble dryer. Cuz



she was like, watch yourself now after this because just because the treatment is finished doesn't mean everything's okay. You know? And she said it's like you come out, nearly come out the tumble dryer, you know, where you kind of have to, you have to be spun around and now you need to straighten yourself out. Yeah. And she said that takes a long will. And it, it always stuck at me because you couldn't describe it better. Really. You know, it's

Speaker 1 ([21:46](#)):

The

Speaker 2 ([21:46](#)):

Hardest I think after. Yeah, yeah. Because you feel like your safety net is gone and

Speaker 3 ([21:50](#)):

Can you believe you a little as well because they think, okay, well your treatment is done, you're okay. Yeah. And then I find, you know, that was the hardest part. It, you know, the years after it are what their hardest, you

Speaker 1 ([22:00](#)):

Know, the hardest part. And you know, I I, I really thought about that a lot as well after that. And the people who love you, this I feel wish you well and want you to be well. And it's very hard then to keep having that conversation going. Yes. Because you love them, your husband, your parents, your kids. You kind of go, yeah, I'm doing great. I'm brilliant and I'm super and finished treatments and I'm gonna feel a million dollars and my hair is going back. But deep in your heart. Yeah. That's not how you feel at all. No. how, how did you, how did you deal with that?

Speaker 3 ([22:32](#)):

I had panic attacks. I had nightmares. I would break down the shower crying when I was by myself. I'd hear any story, sad story of someone passing away with cancer and I was in a more good. And I went and I saw counselor, you know, fairly soon after my treatment finished. But I wasn't ready. It didn't work. I didn't gel with them because I think it was too soon. I did it about a year later and I don't think I was in the right head space. And I did it about maybe 15, 18 months ago. And actually it was great and I've kind of, I learned to leave it out and accept what happened to me. And I think that was the biggest thing, accepting it. You still don't like <laugh>. That happened to me. Yeah, of course. But you know, I've, I've accepted it and I, I think I've dealt with it and it's made me a lot stronger.

([23:19](#)):

And as I said, I don't sweat the small stuff. I'm not around people that, that don't, you know, you kind of cut out all day. You do, you cut out that drama and you just don't need that. You know? And I think it has made me way stronger as a person, you know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. My main priority is my family. My kids making memories with them and just enjoying life, making the most of it, you know? And my nightmare all the time was, my daughter was only three when I was diagnosed and she was starting school the following year. And it, it was, am I gonna see her even start school? Yeah. Never mind my baby start walk or walking or anything, you know, will I see her start school, you know? Mm-Hmm. Now she's in third class, you know? Mm-Hmm. So it's, it's great.



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Speaker 1 ([24:01](#)):

Yeah. And I completely and a hundred percent get you and get that feeling and I think we're fantastic. I have to, we think we have to say

Speaker 3 ([24:12](#)):

That

Speaker 1 ([24:13](#)):

<Laugh>, you know, cause you know, it's, I remember hearing somebody said this sentence to me and it struck at me for those who have had to fight for it. Life has a flavor. The privilege will never know. Oh, like that. Yeah. I, it stuck with me and I loved it. And I remember writing it down and thinking, yeah, that's, that's

Speaker 3 ([24:30](#)):

Definitely appreciate your life.

Speaker 1 ([24:31](#)):

Yeah. That's definitely me. You know?

Speaker 2 ([24:32](#)):

Yeah. And enjoy all the milestones, like Yeah. Yeah. With me it was always like, you know, with the kids, the holy communion. Then I wanted to see them have their confirmation. Then I wanted to see them graduate. And then my daughter went to college. She's a teacher now. Ah. she got engaged just before

Speaker 3 ([24:50](#)):

Christmas. Oh,

Speaker 2 ([24:51](#)):

Amazing. My middle girl's in University of Limerick doing what she wants to do. And my son is in leaving cert now. And my husband's in a good place. We're great. And it was hard, hard now I have to say hard and you hit a lot of, you know, bumps in the road, but

Speaker 3 ([25:09](#)):

By God, setbacks. Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([25:11](#)):

My husband and my family got me through and myself.

Speaker 3 ([25:14](#)):

Yeah. I think it could make a break. A lot of people, you know that impact of the treatment and the, you know, the moods and the, the ups and the downs and the, you know, a hundred

Speaker 2 ([25:25](#)):

Percent make or

Speaker 3 ([25:26](#)):

Break. Yeah. I you, yeah. Yeah. So I think I know I'm very lucky to have the support I have around me and I yeah. The fantastic husband and family I have, you know, so yes. Blessed, very appreciated for that. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([25:36](#)):

And then do you talk about it much to your husband and

Speaker 3 ([25:40](#)):

I'd be a bit of a talker, <laugh>. So yeah, as I said, like I would be very open about it and, you know, if anyone asks me, I would, I would talk about it and more so to kind of, you know, try and share a story for me to kind of be able to talk about it. And for maybe people have something in the back of their minds where they're worried or, you know, friends have come to me before it, you know, I think I have a pain and I'm like, you know, go straight, get it checked. It's, it's good to talk about it, but I, I do think what you said a well ago, it does get to a stage where you're nearly kind of over talking about it and people want you to be well, and I would still bottle a lot up mm-hmm. <Affirmative>. and I'd find my own way of dealing with it, you know because there's only so much people can listen to you, I suppose. Yeah. Saying the same thing, you know. But I do have a great support network around me and it, it, it is good to talk about it.

Speaker 1 ([26:33](#)):

Yeah. Lisa, just picking up on that point there. So, you know, Lynn is five years and you will be 10 years and I'm, I dunno if it's a process, process, but certainly you do start to feel a little bit, you know, stronger as the years go along. A little bit more confident I think in that, you know, it, it may not come back. Cause we've all Googled it, we know it's a dangerous disease. We've lost beautiful friends to it. And my heart's skips a beat when I hear of a mom who is, you know, is not, it's gonna leave her children behind and, you know, it breaks, breaks my heart. And so it's very close to us and it, it hurts when that happens. And just going back to touch on that bit about people wishing you to be well and in a very lovely way it becomes harder to talk about it. I would honestly say I don't talk about it to my friends and family anymore. O other than if I'm meeting a, a friend who has been through it or somebody who's been diagnosed and then I'm there for them. But I, I don't really feel that it's something that I can't, I, I can't, I, not that I'm guilty talking about it, I feel I'm, I'm lucky. I'm, I'm grateful I am here. I feel that it's, it's, it's before, even though inside I haven't changed how I feel about it. Yeah. How, how's that for you?

Speaker 2 ([27:58](#)):

Well, I think sometimes you just feel like you're do, you know, maybe harping on a bit about it, like, but you know, I like to talk about it because I think every time I open my mouth and talk about it, that I'm helping somebody. Yeah. And to me that's, if I can sprinkle a little bit of goodness or help to anyone, I'm from a small town in Aire County, me, all women, all ends of the country being diagnosed. There's a lot of women in battle now being diagnosed. And I hope they look at me and go, oh, please God, that will be me in 10 years. And I just want to be a symbol of hope for them. And I'm, it's a small town. People know

what I've been through. I'm there to talk to anybody that wants, you know, to listen. If there's somebody that doesn't want to hear my story, that's their, that's okay. Too.

Speaker 1 ([28:50](#)):

Choice. Yes,

Speaker 2 ([28:51](#)):

It's fine. Some people aren't ready, some people aren't able. That's okay. 100% all I can be is be me. Yeah. And if that helps somebody, that's fantastic. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([29:01](#)):

So Lynn, you spoke about, and I think it's very interesting that you went to speak with, with somebody to, to help because it is a very difficult time and you're alone in your own thoughts so many times, you know, in the house and going for a walk or getting, going from the supermarket to the car and something might hit you or you might think about something or memory might come up on your phone or something. And it can be a very lonely time. And as time goes on, I personally feel sometimes it's harder to talk to the people that are very close to you about it because other parts of life take over and other things happen. And it's kind of, that was ages ago and you're, you're well now and you're doing great and you look amazing.

Speaker 3 ([29:44](#)):

Thanks <laugh>. And

Speaker 1 ([29:46](#)):

So how, how is that for you? So do you feel that you can still talk like deeply and openly to the closest to you, like your husband and your close friends and things like that?

Speaker 3 ([29:57](#)):

I, I honestly do think I could tell tell my husband anything and he would support me. But I think it's my own feeling on it where I bury things a bit more. Okay. and I can honestly say five years on, I still think about this every day. Every little ache, every little pain affects me. And any little story that I come across, you know, can kind of twig something, tweak an emotion where, you know, real upsets me for, you know, where someone else wouldn't understand at all what's actually wrong with me, you know? But I, I do think I can have the conversation. I think it's me that's holding myself back because I just feel I am well, I've put them through enough. And it's the guilt of that as well. The guilt of what I did to my family, what I did to my husband, what I did to my mom and dad.

([30:47](#)):

You know, my dad wouldn't often show a lot of emotion. And I remember before Adam was born, my husband and my friend organized a little baby shower just to perk me up. And I remember my, my, my, my aunt, Dennis's aunt color, my aunt too, my Auntie Maura asking my dad, you know, you must have got an awful shock. And my dad had been really upset, answering, and I would've never have seen that from my dad. And it kind of drilled home what effect it was having on everyone else as well. So I suppose I've already put them through this, and to this day you're, I'm still ringing my parents going, oh, I'm, I'm

going for a scan here cause of pain in my head, you know, or, and that worry is still with them. So I suppose I don't like burdening them where I can feel I can deal with things myself.

(31:30):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I, I do try and deal with a lot myself, but I can honestly say at the stage I'm mad there's still on a day goes by where I'm not worried about something or, you know, the memory doesn't come back to me or it doesn't, something doesn't upset me or something that I kind of, and it usually is, you know, during the night when you're kind of awake or you have a shower or you've gone for a walk. Yes. Or you just hear a story or somebody says something that twigs a memory or somebody new has been diagnosed, you know that stays at me, but I know in my heart, so like an absolutely turn to them and I can have an honest conversation. I feel I do hold myself back a bit now though because of what I have actually put them through already. You know,

Speaker 1 (32:10):

Like, it's actually incredible to hear you say this because, you know, I think somewhere along the way I thought I was the only one.

Speaker 3 (32:16):

Oh yeah. And when you're in it, you're, you know, you can't see anything else, so you just, you're just too busy. You know,

Speaker 1 (32:22):

<Laugh> and those, all those, everything that you've just said is how I feel and how I have Yeah. Have felt over the last like 10 years. Yeah.

Speaker 3 (32:32):

It's good to know. That's normal though, you know. Yeah.

Speaker 1 (32:34):

It is good to know. It's normal. And I, you know, I think that women and you're just, we're so strong and we, we always portrayed that strong. We always, you care about everybody else and you, you said like you what you did to your family, but like you didn't do anything, you know, and Yeah,

Speaker 3 (32:48):

I know I wouldn't have asked for it, that's for sure.

Speaker 1 (32:50):

You know? Because they wish you well, you want to be well for them. And you spoke about your dad and just, you brought me back to a moment that I haven't talked about in ages that I, I wore my wig out all the time, but I, in the house it was too warm and it was uncomfortable. Yeah. So I didn't, and my kids were used to it. I used to have my head scarf on, but one particular day I was just at the counter in the house and I think it was coming to my last chemo, so I wasn't feeling brilliant. And my mom and dad called over and I forgot for a second. My, my dad actually hadn't seen me like that. And he walked in and he kind of a smile and he just rubbed my head. Ah, <laugh>. And I, I saw the pain in his eyes. Yeah. And I

just went, sugar, I should have put my, my wig on. I wasn't thinking, you know? Yeah. because that's what we do, isn't it? Like, but, and another thing that you said there, and it really makes me think about something those alone taught and that really, you know, we get on with as women to do everything. It is important. I think it, we do need more emotional support and help after breast cancer because nobody tells you

Speaker 2 ([34:00](#)):

All you, and

Speaker 1 ([34:02](#)):

You leave all your treatment and it's free. It's free fall. That's how like, you know, when it's a very lonely place and it, it is. And I'm you know, my breast surgeon passed away a year and a half ago and I'm 10 years. And I remember the feeling going, oh my goodness, who's going actually look out for me now? And so yeah. I

Speaker 3 ([34:17](#)):

Think I had the same breast surgeon. Yeah. Heartbroken altogether. Yeah. Heartbroken. Just, it was like part of your family leaving you, you know? Absolutely. What am I gonna do here now?

Speaker 1 ([34:25](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And, and I still feel it and I feel like that he just had my back and he was actually keeping me well. Yeah. Yeah. And, and, and like Lisa, you, you feel the same way. And with, we're we're 10 years, 11 years. Yeah. Down a different road. And it's, it's probably quite a lonely place if I'm being really honest. Like it's, yeah, it is. If the world goes on around outside and, you know, everything keeps spinning around and the kids are well and, and life is good and everything's happy, but there's a piece of our hearts that are broken. Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([34:55](#)):

I think there always will be, always

Speaker 1 ([34:57](#)):

Little peace. And I, I, I think maybe there's, there's some need somewhere for, I don't think people are ever told this is gonna happen. And you're gonna feel like that 5, 6, 7 years later, that fear, that loneliness, that survival for your family that, you know,

Speaker 3 ([35:16](#)):

Absolute guilt.

Speaker 1 ([35:17](#)):

Yeah. And the guilt, everything. It's and I do think back of what of those couple of years, how different would they have been if it, if it hadn't happened? And always take, always glass half full, take the positive. And I do go back to the superpower. I feel now, you know, you're in a, like when I went yard or

you're talking at something and, and somebody's getting into something and I sometimes I get sucked into it a little bit and then you kind of go, ah, honestly that is

Speaker 2 ([35:42](#)):

Nice, but you have to let yourself have those feelings as well because do you know, you have to just let yourself feel, you know, you deserve to let yourself have the down days.

Speaker 3 ([35:52](#)):

I think that's, that's the superhero being a, a mother as well. I think being a mother, you're just used to juggling it all. Yeah. The kids come first, you know, I, I know myself like I sort them and then I have five minutes to sort myself, you know, and it is the worry about them and it's getting them sorted and you put a lot kind of that guilt then that you've, you've missed so much with them. And I know like if, if I look at Adam's baby stage, I can't remember the first year of his life really. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I just remember fighting with my husband because it was like, I have fed the two girls every night shift. You are not taking over now. And we were fighting over where to put the bassinet in the room. Yeah. The first couple of nights. So we, you need rest, you need rest you in treatment.

([36:32](#)):

And I remember when he was asleep, like, you know, the baby was over next to him and then very minute he started gurgling. I was up over taking him over. Yeah. Fed him, burped him, changed him back in the bassinet. And when he woke up in the morning, my husband said he was great last night. And I was like, I fed him at four o'clock. <Laugh> so proud of myself that I was actually able to do that. But that guilt that, you know, I'm not gonna be not able to feed my child, you know, I was probably dead the next day over it, but Yeah. You knows drive, you just, yeah. As I think as a parent, I think that's being the pa being a parent in that situation and protecting my baby through half the pregnancy, true half treatment and stuff as well, that pushed me on as well. You know, kind of, I have no other choice to get up in the morning. I have no other choice to go forward because these kids are here relying on me and I absolutely have to do it. You know,

Speaker 1 ([37:16](#)):

And I did a probably, you know, in that whole few years afterwards and everything, I went completely cotton wool, my kids, my little girls. I need to see them grow up. I need to put everything in into place. I need to make loads of memories. And you know, running every couple of times, you know, birthdays and anniversary, we go away for a weekend or something and I, I can't explain it, it was like a fear and I was like, mm-hmm. Yeah. Okay, sounds great.

Speaker 3 ([37:44](#)):

Pack everything in <laugh>, don't really

Speaker 1 ([37:46](#)):

Want leave the kids. And so it was and a friend of mine said to me, went for a walk day and said, you I'll take the kids, you shook away for a couple nights, have a break. And I, something came to mind and said, you know, I don't really, I don't wanna miss a thing with the kids, I just, I don't wanna miss a day. Yeah. Because I'm not sure how many of them I have mm-hmm. <Affirmative> and that's four or five years later. Yeah. And I can't say, I don't even still feel the same way mm-hmm. <Affirmative>. that's something

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I, I don't think I would've been like that. I think I probably would've been. And I, I became probably a and worrier in a, in a, a worrier for time. Yeah. You know, I know I need to do I need to do without this because I don't know if I'm gonna get to do that again.

Speaker 2 ([38:27](#)):

Yeah. I was a kind, I was like that, but I kind of would've been a little bit like that with the kids because when mom passed away, my little sister was four and my brother was 10, so I was 17 and my two older brothers were 20. So I kind of would've always said, you know, I never want my kids to feel the way I felt like I never want them, you know, because the, the home, the family was never the same again and it was because of breast cancer. Like, so when I got it, like, I was like, do you know? So,

Speaker 1 ([39:00](#)):

So that's kinda what in can you des describe, describe that because I'd love to know that from my myself. Like so, and I'm sure other people listen to us when say it wasn't the same again.

Speaker 2 ([39:09](#)):

Well it just wasn't the same again without my mother. But that doesn't always have that can it? And now it was because of breast cancer. I lost my mom, but you know, lots of people lose their moms, their dads do, you know, but, but it was, family life was never the same again for us as a family. So I always said when, you know, I have my children that, you know, I wanted three before I was 30 <laugh> because just in case anything ever happened and it ended up happening when I was 36. So genetically obviously I bet myself up going, did I do something wrong? Did I, you know, I didn't do anything wrong, I did everything right. You know so I had to kind of, you know, deal with my own emotions as well. And I suppose I wasn't even 10 years ago, I was very vulnerable, very vulnerable when we met the last time.

([40:05](#)):

And but now I'm definitely, I've dealt with a lot of demons I suppose that I had carried trauma from losing my mom at, at such a young age and watching my siblings, like we had to have a fifth birthday party for my sister in the hospital when mum was dying. Her birthday was the 25th of March and mum died on the seventh March. So we had to have one early for her. Ah, pretend fifth birthday. Well, mum was still there, so like they were all those traumas came back into my head when I got diagnosed and Ethan was six seven As I was like, I can't leave these kids, I can't leave them. I fight every breath. And I did. You did And I'm still here.

Speaker 3 ([40:48](#)):

You did. And it is a trauma, like it's a great way of describing it is trauma cancer is a, is a trauma,

Speaker 2 ([40:53](#)):

100%

Speaker 3 ([40:54](#)):

Trauma, the treatment is a trauma, the surgeries, our trauma, you know, there's a lot a lot to deal with there.

Speaker 2 ([40:59](#)):



Yeah. And you can go months where you're, okay, sorry, but you can go months where you're fine and sometimes it mightn't enter, like I know it enters in little ways in different, when you see people, but you could go months where you're like grand and, and it could be just one thing, like an ad on the tell or it could be, you could be clearing out your wardrobe and find a scarf that you had and you know, it, it just could be like, I know even af my dad died five years ago from a brain tumor and when I was clearing out the house, I found my mom's prosthesis and I never grieved my mom because I was 17 by God. I didn't grieve my dad because I just knew he was ready. But by God I grieved my mom in that house. I don't know how the neighbors didn't come in from the estate, I was roaring, but I just do, you know, it's a, we have to deal with so many emotions like, but my thing was always, there's always somebody somewhere going through worse and dealing with worse than you are.

[\(41:58\)](#):

But you have to let yourself have your feelings,

Speaker 3 [\(42:00\)](#):

But your journey is your journey and it doesn't make it

Speaker 2 [\(42:02\)](#):

Any, it is your journey, you know, and everyone has their journey and it's great that we're here to talk about

Speaker 3 [\(42:08\)](#):

It. Tell the tale. Yeah. <laugh>

Speaker 1 [\(42:10\)](#):

I often, one of my things would've been the Christmas decorations. I actually love Christmas, but that first year, putting the tree up, then putting the decorations back down and I actually remember putting them all in particular ways because the, if water wasn't going to be able to do with the following year, and now it's still there. I hate it. I hate it. You know, it's like, but it's much more of a confidence and you're, you know, there are all these little small things in your life that nobody knows and like I've never told anybody that. Yeah. That I just like, and I feel really easy, open and easy. That's it. I gotta sit here for the next like two hours. But I, you know, you, you talked about like this, I just definitely an aspect in it. I think of like a post-traumatic stress, you know, it's kind of, yeah. You know, you, you do all of this stuff and you're, you know, you're make willing yourself well and you're getting better and you're back out there and your hair starts growing back and, and, but that's it then. And then you have to, there's other stuff and then a few years later, you know you might have more surgery or do anything and you probably don't even talk about that part because that's a couple of years on and nobody, it's not really something you talk about, but it's enormous Yeah.

Speaker 2 [\(43:17\)](#):

To

Speaker 1 [\(43:17\)](#):

Deal with. Like, it's

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Speaker 2 ([43:18](#)):

Huge. Yeah. Like your friends might go, wait, why are we in Galway yesterday? Yeah. Oh, I had to go. It's fine. It's not, I had to just go for, you know, but like you could have been balling that day cause

Speaker 3 ([43:27](#)):

Memories would come and is that scan scans anxiety as they call it? You know, is those even annual scans are, you know, okay, I've headache consent for a brain scan. It's that worry like that you, you went into the hospital rattling. Yeah. You know, kind of thinking, oh good god, is it back? Yeah. and I think in, in 20 years time, if I go for a scan, like I don't think <laugh> that's going to change, you know that. Yeah. It's fear of what they're gonna find, you know,

Speaker 1 ([43:50](#)):

You know, I, I actually feel so empowered today speaking to the both of you and I that from the bottom of my heart because I honestly thought it was me and I was one of these people who just really worried about all of these things, but it's not, we, it is there. We are the

Speaker 2 ([44:04](#)):

Same. Thank you Paula.

Speaker 1 ([44:05](#)):

Oh, thanks Paula. We have to do this again. I have to talk again.

Speaker 3 ([44:09](#)):

<Laugh>

Speaker 1 ([44:10](#)):

To be continue. Thank you so much. Thank you Lisa. It was so good. And thank you so much then. Hi Paula. I actually think you were super women. I am so proud of both of you're like you're phenomenal. Thank you. Can wait to see the next 10 years and 20

Speaker 3 ([44:22](#)):

Years and yeah. Andrew, you Paul.

Speaker 1 ([44:23](#)):

We'll meet up in our like eighties and nineties and just

Speaker 2 ([44:26](#)):

Have a glass. Big old women walk,

Speaker 1 ([44:27](#)):

Women like telling the story. Thank you, you so much. Thanks Milli. Paula, enjoy. It was very extremely brave to do it and I know that so many people out there are gonna sit there and listen and go, wow, actually I feel like that. Yeah. Yeah. It's incredible. Thanks. Thank you. Thanks so much.

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Speaker 4 ([44:48](#)):

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