

Speaker 1: A diagnosis of breast cancer can cause a life changing ripple effect of impact affecting those. We love the most and those upon whom we lean for comfort and strength in the most challenging of times, my name is Ash Hurley, and I'm the CEO of breast cancer Ireland. And you're listening to more than a lump, a podcast that talks openly and honestly, to a selection of guests about their very personal connection to breast cancer, be it through their career choice, [00:00:30] their own firsthand experience of the disease, or through sharing the experience of close family members. My conversations will and on how breast cancer has informed their perspective on life, love family health, their goals, and indeed their aspirations. Although each story is utterly unique. The one common thread that runs through each one is that breast cancer is more than a lump.

Speaker 1: Georgie Crawford [00:01:00] was due to return to work at the end of maternity leave. And only 32 years of age, when she first discovered a lump in her breast shortly afterwards, she was diagnosed with breast cancer in those early days, weeks and months as the impact of her diagnosis began to hit her. Georgie turned to the people in her life that she loved. And most of all who loved her in particular, her fantastic husband, Jamie, her wonderful mom Siobhan and together they studied her, put their arms around her and nurtured her back to health. Now an ambassador of breast cancer Ireland, Georgie joins me today with Siobhan [00:01:30] to reflect on the past four to five years, the highs, the lows, and to share with us how finding a lump was, has utterly changed her life in so many ways. Georgie and Siobhan are very welcome to the more than a lump podcast.

Speaker 2: You so much,

Speaker 1: It's lovely to see you both here today, both looking so healthy and well as usual and fantastic to be able to have this chat. After the few years that we've had Siobhan, I've seen for myself, what an amazing support you have been to Georgie over the last four or five years, whether it has been clapping as she was dancing, going through chemotherapy [00:02:00] up on a stage in the, in the concert hall or whether, you know, running the great pink run. And you're all there as a family unit. Yeah. I mean, it's been phenomenal. The support that you, you, you and your family have given to Georgie and Georgie, you're just back from New York, having realized a dream of a half marathon, which I can't get over, which is fantastic. And you took to running after your diagnosis.

Speaker 2: Yeah. So in my recovery, I'll never forget it. My oncologist Dr. Jenny Weston, who is an earth angel, um, said to me, [00:02:30] Georgie, you have to exercise. And she she's an American lady and I'll never forget the exact words that came out of her mouth. She said, Georgie women who exercise in their recovery do better. Wow. And when said that, um, I'll never forget where I was sitting. I looked out a window and I thought I have to find a way to make this work for me. So I was determined. And one day I hopped up on a treadmill and it just felt right. And I've never looked back. Look, [00:03:00] I don't put on my runners and skip out the door every day, delighted to be running down the road, but I get it done. And I think I quickly realized that it helped my mental health even more than my physical health.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And I think that's, what's key. We always say, you know, exercise, it's one of those risk reducing factors that E even if you just walk, you know, get your steps in, it does release endorphins. It does give you time to think. And it makes you feel in a better place.

Speaker 2: Yeah, absolutely. And I think, you know, in my [00:03:30] recovery from cancer, I was given time. So before I got sick, I was always running around like headless chicken and lots of frantic energy. And then when I got that time to actually think about how do I feel after coming back from being outside or going for a walk up my mom, and I'd say, I feel better. And how do I feel after going for a run? Well, I feel empowered. I feel less anxious. So taking time [00:04:00] to really think about what I was doing and the positive impacts it was bringing to my life. That was the life changing bit for me.

Speaker 1: Fantastic. And just very briefly as an ambassador for Breast Cancer Ireland, and on The Good Glow, I know you have spoken, you know, in depth about your diagnosis and your treatment, but just give us a, to this, these listeners, a very short synopsis of that moment, where you had to have that nighttime chat with Jamie when you really felt something wasn't right.

Speaker 2: When I found the lump. Yeah. So, uh, I was really tired that week. I was [00:04:30] getting ready to go back to work. Um, and Jamie did the night feed and when he was putting PI back into her crib beside my bed, I sat up and my hand fell against the lump. So I was not breast to wear, never check my breasts. I was so lucky where my lump was because it was literally sticking outta my chest. And if that lump had been buried in my breast, I don't know when I would've found it. So, yeah, it's [00:05:00] actually funny because I put Jamie's two fingers against the lump and I will never forget the look on his face. And the next morning I was standing on my mom's doorstep handing in my baby because I was going to the GP at half eight and I took my mom's hands and put it against the lump and her face was the exact same as Jamie's. It was like 10.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah. It is. It is that it is that moment of completing other utter shock. And Siobhan you know, as a mom, I'm a mom of, you know, [00:05:30] adult children, adult girls, like 27 and 22. And I think it does it grasps me in the stomach. When I hear Georgie speak about it at such a young age, how did you feel

Speaker 3: I was completely broken hearted? Um, I was scared initially. I was so sad. Um, and the shock of when sh I mean on Wednesday, we were out shopping for two cos for P one for my house and one for Georgie's house. She was going into a cot. [00:06:00] Yeah. And we were having a great time on Wednesday. We were walking every day. And on Thursday, you're sitting on the couch, wondering if your, your own baby has breast cancer. Yeah. And I, I couldn't believe it. I was completely broken. I think, I mean, to watch your daughter with the fear in her eyes. And I remember one day very early on, we hadn't had the diagnosis yet. [00:06:30] And Pia and Georgie was in my house and

Georgie went up to her old bedroom and I'll never forget. She was lying on the bed with Pia on her chest, trying to get Pia at seven months for a little afternoon sleep.

Speaker 3: And I just went into the room. It was dark. And I, and I sat on the bed beside Georgie and she had, she had big silent panic tears rolling down her face. And, [00:07:00] um, I, I couldn't speak. Yeah, I couldn't speak. And it was just awful. It was an awful time. It was such a worrying time. Of course. Um, she was just had a baby. She was just a new mom. And to see your starting off her life. Yeah, yeah. To see your child full of fear is the worst thing I wanted to do it for her. She said to me, then she said, I ne she said, mom, I can't do this. I'm not gonna be able to do this. And I felt, oh my God, I'm not gonna be able to do it, but I have to be strong. [00:07:30] So I said, you can, I held her hand.

Speaker 3: And I said, you can do it. I said, you will do it. And everything's gonna be okay. And I be with you every step of the way. Yeah. The words that everybody needs to hear, you know? And I think that was a, that was a very difficult week waiting, you know? Um, we'd never had breast cancer in the family. We were, you know, we were just hail and hearty. You know, she, you know, my kids in my life and obviously, you [00:08:00] know, when your kids get sick, you, you just can't do it. You just don't want to do it. You want to do it yourself for them. Yeah. And I would've taken it from her there. And then, but Georgie is amazing. She's very vulnerable, but she's very powerful at the same time. Mm absolutely. And she helped me through it also. Yeah. But I, I said that day that when Georgie and Pia went home and Sam, Joe came home and I fell apart that [00:08:30] night. And I said, I, you know, I can't watch her like this. Well, what are we going to do? So they would help me brilliant. And Michael and Ciara. And they were my little tribe in the background. And Jamie, of course, Jamie was so practical and Jamie would give me the facts and say, oh, you know, don't be getting so emotional. We, this is going to be okay. You know, and we I'd say, okay, tell me the facts. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1: Just to reassure you.

Speaker 3: But from there on it was, we just, you know, people would [00:09:00] say to me, God, you're so brave. Georgie's so brave, but we weren't brave. We were on our knees for a year.

Speaker 1: Of course, of

Speaker 3: Course. Yeah. You know, every day I'd go to Georgie at half seven in the morning and you didn't know what day, what was gonna happen that day. Yeah. Yeah. You know, you just wonder, is it going to be a good day or is she going to be low depending, you know, on the treatment, how she was feeling, um,

Speaker 1: And you as a mom, you kind of put on your body armor. Yes. You know, to brave yourself so that if you have a bad day [00:09:30] yeah. If you do have a bad day, she's there to pick you up. And if you're in great form, then she can, you know, and I think that's, what's lovely. And that's the great bond you have, which is amazing. You know? And I remember you saying at one point when Arnie Hill was talking to you, you said, right. I

have a mountain to climb. And I remember him saying to you, it's just a bump in the road. Yeah. Yeah. And you know,

Speaker 3: And that was,

Speaker 1: Was so reassuring. Yeah.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Because I think when she, when Georgie found the lump, I think that was nearly harder. She was diagnosed. Yeah. Because we were so reassured by Professor Hill [00:10:00] and Georgie was then saying, it's okay, mom. It's okay. And that she gave me strength. Yeah. And it, it, it's unbelievable. It's hard to explain how you, you feel a bit better after the diagnosis. Yeah.

Speaker 1: I've heard that from a number of people, but it's, yeah. It's just the clarity that, okay, I know what we're doing. I know what I'm dealing with. Yeah. Yeah. You know, I know my treatment plan, you know, they have mapped it out for me. And as we've always said, it's very personal to every single person that's diagnosed, you know, genetically we know that your treatment plan is very different [00:10:30] to anybody else's in the world. Yes. You know, which is fantastic. I mean, it just shows how far we've come. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah. And I think even, um, so when I found the lump, I was referred to Vincent's because that's closer to my home. And I rang around every breast clinic that day, trying to get an appointment quicker because of my age, because I was under 50, my GP said it might take a little bit longer for me to be seen. Um, so I rang around all the different breast and I ended up at Beaumont Hospital. [00:11:00] I didn't even know where the hospital was. I just knew it was like the other end of the M 50 to where I lived. And, um, I got an appointment and I was basically matched with Professor Hill. And the day I met him, I knew that, that it was meant to be, he saved my life. He is a huge part of my life now. Like don't, I, I adore him adore.

Speaker 2: I love going to see him. I make sure that like, I'm really well put together. So he believes in me that I'm [00:11:30] gonna stay well. And, uh, I go in for my appointments and he's like, um, when's the last time you did a 10 K. And I tell him, because what time did you do in? And he's always trying to beat me. He does beat me, but I'll get him one day. But, um, I think, you know, that was my path. It was meant to be, I was meant to be in his care. And I know so many people who are under Professor Hill feel the same way or whatever doctor you eventually end up with. Um, you do buy, they are the [00:12:00] most incredible people on the planet.

Speaker 1: They really are. They really are. I mean, I talk to so many and it's just, people's eyes light up because I suppose they are the saving team. They are the team that, you know, got your cancer and got rid of it. Yeah. You know, so you are forever indebted to them. Absolutely.

Speaker 2: I remember when I was lying on the operating table about to get my lumpectomy, I dunno if I've ever told this story, but, uh, Professor Hill always took an interest in my life

and he knew, you know, about Pia my family. [00:12:30] He knew I worked in Spin. I was a news reader and I used to be called Georgie with the Story, um, in work. And I remember lying on the operating table and he was, they just put the mask on me. So I was about to go asleep. And I remember him saying, this is Georgie with the story.

Speaker 4: And I remember thinking, oh God, all of these people are gonna know what my boobs look like,

Speaker 2: But there's that, that love there, you know? And that bond that will help forever AB yeah,

Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah. No, it is. It is amazing. And [00:13:00] I mean, then you took that big drastic step for lots of people. It would be a drastic step where you went back to work, but you suddenly realized, you know what, there's more to life.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I, I went back and obviously I felt like a different person. We, you know, anyone who's been through cancer, you know, we're all different coming out the other side. And I remember I was going back to read the news and the stories were hitting me a little bit harder and it used to be water off a Duck's back, you know, reading the news for me. But I remember I'd be [00:13:30] in the bathroom crying and it was around the cervical check, um, stories. And, oh my God, I just really started to affect me. And so I started a podcast to tell stories of overcoming and survival and thriving, and it just felt like they were complete opposites. And one was kind of dragging me down and one was lifting me up. So I sat at my desk. I said, I need to make a choice. So I took the leap, I quit my job. [00:14:00] Um, and thankfully I, I haven't looked back, but it just felt like, do you know what I've come so far? And I don't wanna go backwards. And I'm working on every part of my life now. And I feel such positivity in my and soul that I need to stay with that. So it's a hard decision, but everyone was really supportive of me walking away from that life

Speaker 1: And the right one, you know, it's just proven it is the right step. I mean, look at how successful [00:14:30] things are now. You're doing what you absolutely love. You're really successful at an congratulations on your recent award it's spiders. Well, thank you so much. Um, but it just shows you you're the impact you're having, um, on others as well as it, it impacting you in a positive way.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I think, you know, we all have a story and I think by sharing your story, you can empower other people. And I wish so I only discovered breast cancer Ireland. Um, well I think I was [00:15:00] starting chemotherapy, but in those weeks when I had just been diagnosed, if I had, have seen a story about a 32 year old who got over breast answer and ran a half marathon and felt joy in her heart again, because I was so afraid, I'd never be the same person. I'd never laugh again. I'd never have the same crack again. You know, I just felt like it would, I'd be sad forever. And the only people I knew were Kylie and Julie [00:15:30] Ransick, they were only young people. I knew that had survived breast cancer. So then when I got involved at breast cancer, Ireland, and I met Emma and Paula and Olivia and Denise and all of these young women, and we really helped each

other through that time. But it's so nice. You know, now that you have podcasts or Instagram pages that you can, all you want, I suppose when you're diagnosis is a bit of hope, that's, that's all you need is someone to just plant a seed of hope. And my mom did that for me every day. And I know she went home and fell [00:16:00] apart. Yeah. But that's what you need.

Speaker 1: Absolutely. Um, and it's interesting. I mean, I remember back in the day when you, we convinced you, even though you were going through treatment to dance in the Bartle of the stars convinced, I mean, honestly, but I can remember you coming in when you may not have been feeling great having just had chemo. And yet she, she would say to me, you know, oh, I'll just give, gimme a bottle of water. I'll be fine. I'll get through it. I'm going, oh my God, it takes a very strong, powerful woman. And that's what you are. You know, the strength that is within you [00:16:30] is amazing. And I suppose the strength of your family holding you up, being there to support you, minding PI, being there for Jamie, you know, that's all really, really important stuff when it comes to family and community. And it's one of the things I suppose, in breast cancer are, and I'm always aware of is that while the cancer diagnosis is to the individual, the knock on effect in the family unit and in your friends and your local can is massive.

Speaker 2: Yeah. And even for my mom, like my mom, didn't see her friends or didn't go out. [00:17:00] Like my mom has amazing neighbors who are best friends. And I'd say on a Friday, after a long week of looking after me, I'd say, mom, go on, go out for a drink or

Speaker 3: I couldn't go out. She couldn't, I just couldn't go out. And

Speaker 3: If I, if I did go out, I just couldn't stop thinking about it. I just couldn't let it, let myself go and laugh or whatever, you know, even though, you know, Georgie was doing well on her treatment and everything was going well, but I, I just couldn't, I just stayed with our own little, you know, our own little bubble even [00:17:30] before the pandemic. I know. And, um, you know, we, we used to be no own as the party of five. There was myself and Joe and three kids. Yeah. And we were very close now we're party of 11, we've got JB, Kira and Sophie and our three little darlings. Yeah. Um, so they're the ones that, you know, we all pulled together were we're just stronger together.

Speaker 1: And at what time did you, at what moment did you sort of take a breath and relax once you knew [00:18:00] that Georgie was on the, on the recovery ward?

Speaker 3: Yeah. I, I, I, I did. I mean, we, we, we, the night, the day that chemotherapy was out over was a wonderful day. Um, I found, you know, I found Georgie's treatment hard, you know, but when, when chemotherapy was over, Jamie invited us all up. Um, and that was a wonderful night and we'd loads of balloons and we let the balloons off into the air, just, just the family and unknowns to each other. Everybody brought a gift. [00:18:30] Ah, which was beautiful, you know, and I, I remember I got Georgie, a bracelet with beautiful little, uh, motivational coats on, on charms. And, and, uh, Kira comes in with a massive bouquet of flowers. We couldn't see her, they were so beautiful and, and, um, orgy was there and, and Sam was late. He comes in, he went and got, he was down in

Dundrum getting a Teddy bear or a bear made in the bear shop. Yeah. And he comes in with the bear and, you know, Sam is a man, a few words [00:19:00] and he, the bear played Bob Marley's, everything's going to be okay. Ah, it's the tune. And he got into the bear. So those moments were wonderful. And, and, you know, we did accent. I mean, we had faith and everything was going to be okay. And, and it was, it was okay. Um,

Speaker 1: Yeah, it's, it's amazing. I remember, oh, it's now probably six years ago. I was sitting doing an interview similar to this with somebody and I have five sisters and my moms or the seven women. Yeah. And it had not touched [00:19:30] my family. And I was saying, you know, I'm very lucky cuz one in nine is statistics for women in their lifetime. And about two weeks ago, after that my mother rang me. She was down in court having a mammo. And she said, you're not going to believe this. And she had been diagnosed again. She had a lumpectomy in that. And I remember my sisters all rallied to, to her and my dad and everybody. But the one thing I suppose I was able say to her was, it's gonna be 12 months of horribleness. Yeah. You're gonna be tired. You're not, you're gonna be worried.

Speaker 1: Of course, we're all gonna be here for you, but I promise you that [00:20:00] 13 months will change and you will be back playing your golf. You'll be back going on holidays. You'd be back to yourself. And I remember her looking at me in disbelief going, you don't know how do you know that? And I was only from all of my experience in talking to others and their experiences that I was trying to be more uplifting for her. Yeah. You know, while I had other sisters older and younger who were falling all around her. Yeah. And I was kind of saying, you know, mom, you're, yes, you're gonna be tired. And yes, it is normal to feel tired after radiotherapy, but you know, you're gonna bounce back.

Speaker 3: You bounce

Speaker 1: Back, you know, and [00:20:30] trying to give my dad that kind of motivation to, to stay positive around her and not to allow her fear and where we overcome him, you know, because he equally was terrified at the prospect and now she's finished her treatment. She's off her drugs. After five years, the doctor said to her at one point you'll feel 10 years younger. She's about to turn 80. And she thinks, yes, here we go. She's holidaying, you know, and, and living her best life, which is great. It is amazing how far we've come in the world of research. Yes. And in the world of new drug therapies that are available. And I [00:21:00] suppose if you were to give anyone that younger self, any bit of advice in relation to education and being aware, what would you say to them?

Speaker 2: I think learn how to check your breasts. And I always speak, um, in my corporate talks about, I think we're really good at getting our smear tests, uh, because it's been drilled into us and, you know, we all were so affected by what happened to Jay goody. But before I got breast cancer never dawned [00:21:30] on me to check my breasts. I didn't think breast cancer happened to women under 50. There was no breast cancer in my family, just not on my radar and also to look out for signs. So I didn't look well in the lead up to my diagnosis. And I kept saying, I look so different. I look, look so different and I'd

always pushed that little voice out of my head that was telling me that there was something wrong. So I think to just, you know, it's that time piece, isn't it?

Speaker 2: That you're [00:22:00] rushing through life and you're not giving yourself a minute to just stop and think. So just to become more aware of your breasts, what's your normal. I know Ciara always says that no, you're normal, that's it? So therefore, you know, when something looks off, but also to trust your gut and, and take some time each week to sit with yourself and have a little check in, how do I feel this week? Or how do I feel today compared to this time last year and to go to your [00:22:30] GP. And I think we can often feel rushed in the GP office. And, you know, we don't wanna ask them to check our breasts cuz we don't wanna take up too much of their time. But you know, I think we need to stand up for ourselves a little bit and say, no, I want to breast check, you know, prioritize yourself because early detection saved my life.

Speaker 1: Yeah. And that's one of the biggest things for us is that, you know, we want women of all ages, you know, your mom, yourself, you know, younger, just [00:23:00] know what the normal baseline is we're dealing with today, empower ourselves as women to understand what's normal and then check yourself on a regular basis so that if you do an abnormality, you're going, haven't seen, you know, you don't wait and think if there is that age, old Irish thing of, oh, it'll go away. It'll go away. Yeah. You know, don't trouble, trouble, you know, you don't want to go there. But yet I do think when I look at survival rates and I look at how far other countries have come, like we're doing really well, but we could do a lot better. And it is about that. Empowering ourselves, [00:23:30] just be more breast aware. Mm.

Speaker 2: And I think even for my mum now, and I went for the bracket test and thankfully, um, I didn't have the gene, but I am so on top of you going and, and what is the story with you mum? Because I don't think

Speaker 1: My

Speaker 3: GP told me that because of Georgie, I need to have a mammogram every year. Um, so you have to make a private appointment every second year to go privately. Okay. Um, but um, it's been pushed out now for three years since the pandemic, but I [00:24:00] just go every year, um, privately for the last two years. Um, and yeah, that's what they said. I have to keep. Yeah.

Speaker 1: It's just about

Speaker 3: Top. Exactly. Exactly. You know, just cause it's your daughter. Absolutely.

Speaker 1: You

Speaker 3: Know, and

Speaker 1: You have to be genetically. Yes, exactly. Your both

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Speaker 3: Related know I've spoken to Georgie's cousins, female cousins. Well, all cousins and said, you know, keep an eye on everything and

Speaker 1: Yeah, absolutely. And I suppose that's another thing I, I asked the question of profil at the same time, you know, my mom was 72, 73 when she was diagnosed. [00:24:30] Yeah. Was she what's my risk. And he was saying low, I'm a low risk because I'm, you know, she was much older when she got it. But for instance, you were so young, you know, anyone that's in that kind of 30 and forties, anyone related to them should be checked once a year. And they have an amazing family health clinic in a history clinic in Beaumont where they assess you both by questionnaire and triage, you sort of medium, high, low risk, et cetera. Um, which gives a great service to people. I think where like you, you Shavon, you're gonna be checked once a year, which is key. Yeah. You know, and that is [00:25:00] vital. Yeah.

Speaker 2: But it's also terrifying, you know, to go and get that, are you low, medium, high risk, but knowledge is power. And although it's absolutely terrifying, I was terrified going for the bracket test cuz I didn't know what it would mean for my mom or my daughter, but I need to know this information. And you know, sometimes it is about taking a deep breath and checking your breasts and picking up the phone and making that appointment to keep putting off. It's so terrifying and overwhelming, [00:25:30] but I think, yeah, just the awareness is

Speaker 3: Huge. It's very important.

Speaker 1: Well, listen, thank you. So both so much, it's been great powerful women around the table this evening, but thank you so much for coming in and talking to us and the very best of luck with everything.

Speaker 2: Thanks for everything that you've done for our family.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Thank you Ashley, for everything you and the team did. It's you've just been such a great support to Georgie and thank you so much.

Speaker 1: Thanks million. Thank

Speaker 3: You.

Speaker 1: The information in this podcast is based on the personal stories of those. We have chatted to. [00:26:00] If you are concerned in any way, please contact your GP immediately or you can contact us at BreastCancerIreland.com