

My cancer journey began a week before Christmas 2003 and took my family, my friends, and me by complete surprise. There were no real symptoms. A little blood here, but “I just had a child.” Some bouts of diarrhea there, but “I am on the Atkins diet.” It wasn’t until I couldn’t use the bathroom for five days

my rectum, the major muscle responsible for holding on, and letting go! It was no coincidence that I had rectal cancer; it was a godsend. I needed to let go, and to let go of a lot of things. My holding on to every little hurt that had been “done to me” was killing me. Rectal cancer was my wake-up call, my opportunity for spiritual growth.

surviving rectal cancer did I truly listen, and I heard it all quite differently.

The most profound component of the safety instructions is what to do when there is a loss of cabin pressure. When this happens, a yellow mask will drop from the overhead compartment. It is no coincidence that the mask’s color is yellow, symbolizing life, light, and happiness. However, it is what you are instructed to do with this yellow mask that has made an unbelievable difference in my life. And I want to share this information with you.

The flight attendant, a kind of spiritual teacher flying among the clouds, instructs you to “put your mask on first before helping anyone else with theirs.” Repeat. “Put *your* mask on *first* before helping anyone else with theirs.” How profound!

In other words, if you do not put your mask on first, there is a great possibility that you will not be able to help anyone else fully. By making this one small adjustment, taking care of yourself first – something we’ve been wrongfully taught is selfish – you will be able to not only help yourself but also help everyone else, effortlessly.

Letting go of old belief systems that do not serve us well is extremely important and healing. Your happiness and your well-being is the most important. Make sure you give to yourself



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first, because only then will you be able to give fully to others. If you are unable to love yourself fully, how can you love others? By loving your whole Self, you are able

to extend that unconditional love to others and heal not only yourself but also the world.

Editor’s Note: Ursula Daiber lives in Watertown, CT. Passionate about life and embracing it fully, Ursula shares what she has learned through her cancer journey and life experiences with individuals ready to heal. Ursula is an empowerment coach and energy healer, specializing in cancer and ostomies. For more on Ursula, visit her Web site, UrsulaTheCancerCoach.com. ■

Everything I Learned about Life after Cancer, I Learned from a Flight Attendant

by Ursula Daiber



in a row, a first for me, that I knew I better see a doctor. I finally understood why some old people get ornery. Constipation just isn’t fun. An emergency colonoscopy was scheduled, and the next day it was determined that I had a large cancerous tumor in my rectum, only 3 cm from entry.

At the time of diagnosis, I was 33 years old, married, and had a beautiful two-year-old son and a great career. Life was good, or so it appeared on the out-

It was time for me to make peace with who I really am – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and embrace it all. I needed to stop judging myself and start loving myself. The time had come to start taking care of me, and only I could do that. I had kept myself in the holding pattern, sitting on the tarmac, but now it was my time to radio to the flight tower and get the okay for takeoff.

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side. But inside, I was a mess. I didn’t allow anyone to see the anger, the resentment, and the lack of self-love I carried inside. Feelings of inadequacy filled my Being, and I stored them deep, not allowing them to pass.

It was quite appropriate that I would place this hurt and self-loathing right in

the flight safety instructions with the passengers on board. How many times have you heard the flight safety information? How many times have you heard that you can use your seat cushion as a floatation device? The real question is, How many times have you listened to these directions? Only after