

ANNA THE ROCK

by

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My son committed suicide. He hung himself in our house, using an extension lead. The neighbours called an ambulance and the police. When the police arrived, he had already passed on. It was on a Monday night. I was not at home, so they called me at work. During that time, I was working night shifts. Eventually my neighbour fetched me at work and broke the news. I felt shocked and heartbroken.





One day I gave a motivational talk with grieving mothers. I was sharing about my son. While I was talking, I felt pins and needles in my left breast. I realised I had a lump under my armpit. I was very worried and the next day I went to the nearest community clinic in Seawind. A nursing sister examined my left breast. She looked at me and recited scripture from the bible. “Jesus calms the storms.” She was preparing me for the journey. She gave me a referral letter for Grootle Schuur, the biggest hospital in Cape Town.

When I arrived, the doctor examined me and sent me to room 12 to do a biopsy. I was the last patient and my niece, Debby, who'd come with me, fell asleep on the bench. The biopsy was very painful. After another half hour, the doctor called me back in and told me straight, I have Stage 3 breast cancer. I couldn't believe it. I was shocked and terrified and in denial.

I took the train home and told my family. My son said I'm not gonna die, and we must believe in God.



At the Cancer Centre I met this great strong encouraging women, and to think of it I thought I was the only one facing this life threatening disease, but it seems like, 'no'. So many people, especially women is facing this. She told me that she lost three brothers to the same disease. Her name was Margaret.

Her elder brother was diagnosed of blood cancer at the age of 16, stage four. The second eldest was diagnosed with spine cancer and passed on. In the same year, the 3rd brother was also diagnosed with the 'piles' cancer at 56.

She started telling me, "I was so close to my brothers and all of them were my idols, but my second eldest brother was my favourite one. We always used to end up together wherever we go. We were eight children. I was the second eldest of the girls and he was the second eldest of the boys. My daddy believed each boy have to look after each girl. That's why it was so hard for me to loose my brother. He was the closest at heart".



Here's to
Strong Women

May we know them
May we be them
May we raise them

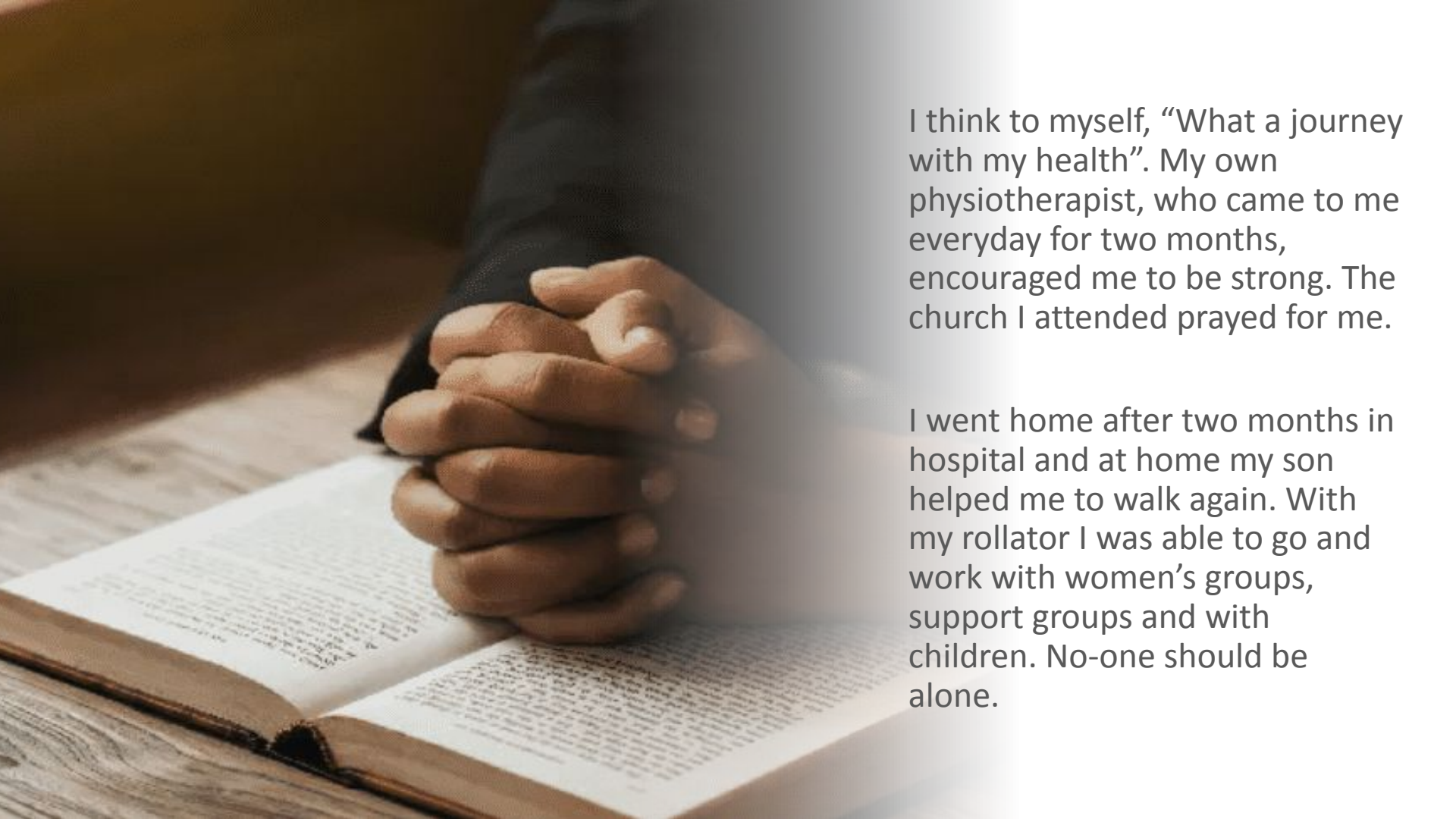


In the cancer Centre they told me there is a support group and I joined it. I realised I am not alone on this journey to battle with cancer. It helps me to accept that there is hope and healing. When we share our experience in the support group about our health it makes me feel better; a road to recovery. I started working again in the community with different activities with the women groups.

Later in 2013 me and my husband went on a holiday to Cerus to visit my in-laws. After a week I couldn't walk on my own and I needed someone to help me. I told my husband I feel very sick and my legs can't support me and we must go back home to Cape Town. When we arrived in Cape Town I was bedridden and couldn't do anything for myself. My son took me to the hospital and at that time I could not even talk. I was there for two weeks for testing.

The doctors decided to send me to Booth Memorial, a hospice, because they said there was no hope for me. I spent two months there. Doctors told me my spine is damaged. With the help of the physiotherapist they tried to get me to walk again, but I couldn't. They sent me home from Booth Memorial but a month later the doctors decided again to book me in at Groote Schuur. While I was there I had surgery scheduled for my colon. However after test results they said "Your immune system is too weak to do surgery".





I think to myself, “What a journey with my health”. My own physiotherapist, who came to me everyday for two months, encouraged me to be strong. The church I attended prayed for me.

I went home after two months in hospital and at home my son helped me to walk again. With my rollator I was able to go and work with women’s groups, support groups and with children. No-one should be alone.

Today I am a motivational speaker. I educate people about cancer. After the journey of my health, with so many milestones, I also achieved to graduate from the University of Cape Town with a Higher Certificate in Adult Education. I also graduated top student in my Bible School in 2023. I love nature and travelling to educate myself and communities.

When I reflect on my life of my journey, I realise God has a purpose for my life, to reach out to the world to tell my story. Today I live a victorious life. I am a strong and a blessed woman.



THE END

Read about the project [here](#).

