



# Secretary's Digest

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear members,



This week we celebrate Administrative Professionals' Week along with the rest of the world. During World War II, there was a shortage of skilled administrative personnel in the United States due to Depression-era birth-rate decline and booming post-war business. The National Secretaries Association, founded in 1942, was formed to recognise the contributions of administrative personnel to the economy, support their personal development, and to help attract workers to the administrative field. Key figures who created the holiday were the President of the National Secretaries Association, Mary Barrett, President of Dictaphone Corporation, C. King Woodbridge and Public Relations Executive at Young & Rubicam, Harry F. Klemfuss.

This issue of the Secretary's Digest covers DSSP's festive lunch in Jan, the EGM in Feb. and Secretaries' Day in Apr. as well as what our sister associations in the Asia Pacific have been doing these past months.

In the workplace, learn what bosses are really looking for in an Assistant and the advice they impart. Choose your attitude carefully as it can make or break your life. Always remember how motivating praise can be.




Asma Butt, one of our members spent the last couple of months battling cancer. Read her story.

Lastly, those wishing to attend the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASA Congress do give in your names before it's too late.

Wishing all of you a happy Secretaries' Day!

Goretti Ali

## UPCOMING EVENTS

 <b>Hi-Tea</b>	<b>21 May</b>
 <b>Leisure Day</b>	<b>17 Jul.</b>
 <b>Hi-Tea</b>	<b>20 Aug.</b>

**DSSP NEWS****In Memoriam - Persis F. Patloo**

Persis F. Patloo who passed away on 14 Jan. 2016 was a DSSP member of long standing along with her sisters Tehmi and Daizy. She was the youngest of the four sisters (Jerbanoo, the second eldest, was a receptionist and could not join DSSP). She was the aunt of Julie Cyrus Patloo and Benaifer Cyrus Kakalia.

May her soul rest in eternal peace. Amen.

*By MOK*

**Festive Lunch at the Pearl Continental - 24 Jan. 2016**

*A pleasant afternoon*

At 12.00 sharp as the doors opened at Ballroom B, PC Hotel, the ladies lined up at the Registration Desk, each holding a gift ready to give in at the Gifts Exchange Counter. As each lady gave in her gift she received an orange slip to hold on to it, until the time came to receive a gift in return. (Each member was asked to bring in a gift worth Rs.300/- or more) Kaftans and bags left over from the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASA Congress in 2014 and from the Halloween Ball in 2015 were on sale for Rs.300/- each. This desk was manned by two new members.

MOK (Maharukh Bhiladwala) began the day by addressing the ladies on how the exchange of gifts would take place. Hopefully all would go well as this was the past practice and had been re-introduced after a long time.



*Gifts galore*

Natasha Mavalvala, President, welcomed all, wishing everyone a very happy New Year. A reminder was given to submit subscriptions for 2016 in order to avoid penalty charges. She gave a brief update on the upcoming ASA Congress in the Philippines this September and advised interested members to give in their names to Zainab Hakimuddin, Joint Secretary. Natasha notified members of the next event on 28 Feb. She also asked the ladies for their suggestions on professional courses / educational sessions they would like to attend and speakers they would like invited.

Natasha informed the members about Aryana Quettawalla, a little girl in need of bone marrow transplant. The family has been unable to find a donor and have learnt of a Stem Cell Transplant being done in Singapore. As this will be very costly, the community has united to collect the required sum. A bowl was passed around for donations. The ladies as usual were very generous and cash amount of Rs.23,100/- was collected. Farida Vachha suggested that the amount spent on one tea meeting could also be donated to this cause, which was agreed by all.



*Calling the numbers for Tombola*

Three games of tombola were then played. MOK, the favourite caller began the game and was followed by Jennifer D'Souza as a guest caller. Half the amount collected from the sale of tombola cards also went to Aryana's treatment. A total of seven prizes were awarded to very satisfied members.

Two new members from PARCO namely Razia Aftab and Fatima Sajid introduced themselves and were welcomed to the DSSP.



*A festive lunch*

A grand festive lunch comprising of chicken biryani, chicken korma, seekh kebabs and a broccoli vegetable mix was served with assorted salads and the sweet dishes were the delicious caramel custard and gulab jamans.

Next came the exchange of gifts, each lady had to come up, collect a number and submit their orange slip and then collect the gifts which were numbered. All proceeded towards the Gift Counter and received their surprise gifts.

The afternoon ended on a note of thanks to our committee members for such a well-organised event.

*By Debbie Moscrop*

### **EGM at the Marriott – 28 Feb. 2016**



*At the EGM*

An EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) of the DSSP was held on Sun. 28 Feb. 2016 at the Dumpukht Restaurant of the Marriott. This was a follow up to the AGM (Annual General Meeting) held last December. Registration of about 100 members began at 3.00 pm and the meeting commenced on time. Natasha Mavalvala was in the chair along with Liana Lobo, Secretary, Mahnaz Irani, Treasurer and Maharukh Bhiladwala, IPPXO.

A minute's silence was observed for Persis Patloo, a senior member who passed away in January. The Minutes of the last AGM were taken as read and approved after members were assured that the few discrepancies raised at the AGM would be corrected by the Auditors at their first available convenience.



*Treasurer, Secretary, President,  
IPPXO*

Among the matters discussed, were donations to charitable institutions. Members were notified that out of the Rs.150,000/- allocated to charitable causes, Rs.72,500/- had been disbursed to little Aryana Quettawala leaving the balance to be used for other charities. Requests for donations were received from Don Bosco's Orphanage for Boys, Providence Home for children from broken homes, Dar ul Sukun's Home for Socially Displaced Girls, St. Vincent de Paul Society for the needy and St Vincent's Home for the Aged. Members present verbally requested for donations for tube wells for the famine and drought stricken people of Tharparkar and for Ibtida Drug Rehabilitation Centre. All were discussed and it was decided that the funds would be used for Providence Home and St. Vincent's Home for the Aged.

Other matters were time-frame adjustment for annual subscription, the organisation of the Executive Committee and the ASA Project. These were discussed and decided to the mutual consent of all. This ended the EGM.

Rosanne Correa from PPL, a new member, introduced herself and was welcomed to the DSSP.



*Rosanne Correa, new member from  
PPL introducing herself*

Members were served an appetising Hi-tea which concluded the evening.



**Secretaries' Day at Avari Towers - 24 Apr. 2016**

*MOK, Urooj Mazhar and Natasha Mavalvala*



*Urooj Mazhar*



*Secretary Burnout!*



*Flask and bookmark*

This year the DSSP celebrated Secretaries' Day on Sun. 24 Apr. 2016, the first day of the official Administrative Professionals' Week. This is celebrated internationally during the last full week in April. Wednesday of that week is Secretaries' Day.

The invitations to the event collected by the members were a pretty bookmark that can always be used. After signing in at the Registration Desk each secretary received a one litre flask which was DSSP's gift for 2016. Welcome drinks were served.

The speaker was the vibrant Ms. Urooj Mazhar from School of Leadership. Her talk besides being educational and thought-provoking was entertaining and interactive. Her theme was "Shine on." She began by asking the ladies at each table to state what age they felt they were at and how they would react to events at the given age. Ages ranged from 3 – 25!! Her next step was for members to state whether they are able to express what they wanted others to see. Answers varied as at given situations one might or might not be able to communicate their thoughts properly. Her next exercise was for each one to draw the sun and explain what the drawing means to a few others in the room. The purpose of these exercises was to define how powerful each person is or can be. In the past leadership meant the position. Today leaders are defined by how they can motivate others i.e. taking the first step or initiative in the right direction. Urooj played a few short videos on our everyday heroes/heroines. Each started small and none held prominent positions when they began. Her last point was on the Circles we live in. That is: i) the Circle of Concern - everything we are concerned about; health, family, security, education etc. ii) the Circle of Influence – everyone we can influence; family, employees, neighbours etc. iii) The Circle of Control - whatever is in our control; ourselves. We can only control ourselves and our reactions to any given situation. Our purpose should be to increase our Circles of Control and Influence, which automatically diminishes our Circle of Concern.

The President, Natasha Mavalvala presented a beautiful embroidered shawl to Urooj as a token of appreciation. Group photos were taken, before all proceeded to a beautifully arrayed scrumptious lunch.

The last item for the day was a hilarious game organised by the Social Secretary, Charmaine Fernandes. Sheets were handed out with the picture of a completely worn out secretary titled 'Secretary Burnout' with various ailments marked. Members were required to fill in the causes of these disorders. Rosemary D'Silva won this game, but several uproarious answers were read out to the delight of all.



Thus ended Secretaries' Day 2016!

## ASA NEWS



*PSWA's picnic*

On Fri. 18 Dec. 2015 PSWA - Bangladesh (Professional Secretaries Welfare Association) held their annual picnic at Bhairab, on the outskirts of the city. The natural beauty and greenery was a welcome change to urban Dhaka. The event included breakfast, snacks, lunch and games and everyone received a gift.

IASAP (Indian Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals) celebrated New Year on Wed. 27 Jan. 2016 at Harry's Bar and Café courtesy EazyDiner.

IASAP members enjoyed an Educational Tour on Sat. 27 Feb. 2016 to Bharat Petroleum's Uran LPG Plant.



*IASAP members at Harry's Bar & Cafe*

On 29 Mar. IASAP organised a session called "Women of Substance - Take Charge" conducted by Charu Sabnavis, Director Delta Learning at YWCA Colaba.

IASAP West Bengal Chapter had a session on 30 Jan. 2016 titled "My work, My Life" at Palm Village Resort.

Members celebrated Women's Day on 13 Mar. 2016 at the One Way Café Banquet with an interactive session entitled "Empowering Women - the Key Change Agent".

On 9 Jan. 2016 IASAP Hyderabad enjoyed a session "Ring in the New Year – Making things Happen". The speaker was Kumari Radhika, Rajyoga Teacher. The Venue was SMR Hall in Corporation Bank Building.

"The Intern" was screened at Tata Motors Ltd. on 13 Feb. for members.

IASAP Hyderabad celebrated Women's Day with an Educational trip to Vimta Labs Ltd. on 12 Mar. 2016.



*Mr. Yuji Mizuno and Ms. Tamako Shimizu*

JSA's (Japan Secretaries & Administrative Professionals Association) New Year Party was held on Fri. 29 Jan. at Grand Hyatt Tokyo and nearly 100 members and non-members attended. JSA President, Mr. Yuji Mizuno announced that some special projects are under way and some will be starting toward the upcoming JSA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. The JSA Award Ceremony was held and Ms. Kyoko Kaneta, Executive Assistant, Amazon Japan and Ms. Tamako Shimizu, who was formerly an Admin. Assistant at Toyota Motors and is currently a specially-appointed professor at Shiga Junior College were awarded for their long-time contribution to JSA.



*CBS Kick-off Party: Mr. Osamu Takeuchi, CBS Director & title holders*

On Sun. 13 Mar. the CBS (Certified Bilingual Secretary) Kick-off Party was held at Celestine Hotel and out of 625 title holders 38 who were certified from 1979 to 2015 attended.





*KAAP members at the AGM*

KAAP (Korean Association of Administrative Professionals) had their Annual General Meeting in Feb. 2016. The new President is Ms. Kyung Mi Lee.

Administrative Professionals' Day was celebrated on 25 Apr. 2016.

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MAPSA (Malaysian Association of Professional Secretaries and Administrators) held an Administrative Professionals' Conference on the 27 - 28 Apr. 2016 at the Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur. The Conference Theme: "Rise to the Challenge: Technology Boot. Leadership Camp."



*Lo Hei dinner for SAAP*

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PNGAAP (Papua New Guinea Association of Administrative Professionals) marked Administrative Professionals' Day with a luncheon end of April. This was complimented with the Outstanding Administrative Professional of the Year 2015. Senior and Junior categories were announced. A four day train-a-thon competency test was conducted leading up to the luncheon.

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SAAP (Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals) celebrated Lo Hei (New Year) with dinner on 17 Feb. 2016 at Yan Palace Restaurant.

They held a Seminar on "Etiquette Essentials and Life Skills for success @ work" from 9.00 am - 4.30 pm on 27 Apr. 2016 at Hilton Singapore. In the evening, SAAP celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Administrative Professionals' Day with a dinner, also at Hilton Singapore.



*SLAAPS' AGM*

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SLAAPS (The Sri Lanka Association of Administrative & Professional Secretaries) held its 38th AGM on Sun.31 Jan. 2016 at the Auditorium of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Colombo 02. Mrs. Damayanthi Fernando took over as President from Ms. Charmaine Jayawardena.

SLAAPS celebrated Administrative Professionals' Week from the 25 - 30 Apr. 2016.



*WSAT at the Museum*

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WSAT (The Women Secretarial Association of Thailand) members visited a Museum on 5 Mar. 2016.

On 21 Mar. 2016, they organised a secretarial course.

## WORKPLACE

### How do you hire? What qualities do you look for?

**Kevin E Loftin**  
Chief Executive of Catholic  
Health Initiatives

I start with the WHY – why are you here, why would this role fit into your career path and why are you interested in coming to our organisation? I then focus on the WHAT - what are the things that you've done that relate to what you might do here and what are your ideas for how you can help us? Then I move to the HOW and that's where character comes in. How do you do business? Somebody might be a cardiovascular surgeon who is going to put a lot of money on our bottom line, but if they yell at nurses in the operating room, then we don't want them.

**Cindi Leive**  
Editor in Chief of Glamour  
Magazine

I want to see that they're energetic and curious. At least half the questions I ask are to just hear how the person talks when they respond. Are they confident, interested? Journalists have to be prepared for interviews. Have they prepared for this one? I always ask people why they want the job. There's not one right answer but I want to see that there is a reason. I also ask "What would you be doing if you weren't in this business at all?" I'm always curious about who people are outside of work. I want to hire people who have something going on in their lives besides work. I have definitely seen that people who have full lives are not just happier but also tend to be better at their jobs. They don't take everything so personally.

**Ian Bickley**  
President of the international  
group of Coach, the leather ware  
and clothing manufacturer

First, smart people, but also nice people, people with humility, people who are comfortable with themselves and a strong sense of self awareness, people who are good listeners and can build relationships and can work in an organisation where this is important. For me, it's not about hiring the perfect person, but knowing where the potential shortcomings are, because that we can manage against. If in the due diligence process, we discover certain things that are not perfect, it's OK but we can have an open discussion with the candidate about it beforehand to manage expectations in different fields. That is a much more constructive way of bringing new people into an organisation.

**Maria Contreras-Sweet,**  
Administrator of the United  
States Small Business  
Administration

When I'm building a team, I'm looking for people who are resourceful. That's a very important quality. I need people who are flexible and I really need people who are discreet. Sometimes you are in situations where you don't know what the outcome might be or maybe it's a privileged conversation. I've learned that it's really important to surround myself with people who are discreet, resourceful and flexible. Discreetness speaks of integrity. I need them to be flexible, because you never know what time of day you're going to need them.

**Nancy Dubuc**  
Chief Executive of A&E Networks

A lot of it is intuition. I also think about the skills I have and the skills I need. I'm a big believer in the idea that people tend to fall into one of three camps – you're a thinker, a doer or a feeler. So I'll be thinking about the mix of those three groups on my teams. If you have all thinkers, nothing will get done. If you have all doers, that can be really chaotic because you're not necessarily thinking about the consequences. And feelers are important because they create energy – but if you have too many of them, they will just dramatise the moment.

**What kind of mentoring advice do you typically give?**

**Kevin E Loftin**  
Chief Executive of Catholic  
Health Initiatives

They should take a blank sheet of paper and an envelope, write down a goal of something that they want to do over the coming year and then seal it.

A year later, take it out and grade yourself on whether you worked towards that goal. Then set a new goal for the next year. It's really just to get into the habit of looking at the things they need to work on, setting a personal goal and then seeing how they've done against that goal. I still do this myself every year.

**Cindi Leive**  
Editor in Chief of Glamour  
Magazine

I think everybody does better if they really like some aspect of what they're doing, but work is work. We can't all work in jobs where we feel like our heart is singing every day.

The idea that your job is going to make your heart sing on a daily basis is just not true. But you can aim for a pretty good heart singing to a broken down radio.

**Diane von Furstenberg**  
Fashion Designer

Whether it's career advice or life advice it's always the same thing. The most important relationship in life is the one you have with yourself. The more you are true to yourself, the more you practice the truth, the happier you will be and the less frustrated you will be because you will have followed what is closest to you.

**Elim Chew**  
Founder and President of 77<sup>th</sup>  
Street, an alternative clothing  
retailer in Singapore

I think today's young people do have a heart and want to do good, but if you want to succeed that's not enough. You also need to think things through. So my advice: Before launching yourself into a career, get some experience, do volunteer work. Many youngsters today have been raised on handouts from their parents and they need to build some inner core strength. They can't take stress, because they've never experienced hardship, they've never experienced failure; their parents have always been there to help. To build a muscle, you need to train regularly; it's the same in the workplace. You will have issues coming your way every day and that's something you need to learn to deal with so it doesn't become stressful. What you learn early on will be valuable lessons.

**Aaron Bell**  
Chief Executive of AdRoll, an  
online advertising placement  
firm

I definitely suggest people work for early stage or midstage companies because you're going to learn a lot more. I try to steer young people away from larger companies. The company is going through more change at smaller companies and you tend to be in a deeper end of the pool where things are going to get done. So it's just more of an extension of college. There's accelerated learning in that period.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



Jessica McGregor Johnson is author of *"The Right T-Shirt; Write Your Own Rules and Live the Life you Want"*. Jessica has worked internationally as a coach for nine years empowering women to go out and live the life they choose. Jessica has been there, done that and got the wrong T-Shirt so has walked the path she now writes about.



### Choosing Your Attitude

By Jessica McGregor Johnson

It can be a challenging time when our world as we know it shifts beneath our feet. One of my favourite quotes is:

*Don't worry about having the carpet pulled from under your feet;  
learn to dance on a shifting carpet.*

That's the key right now, and it all depends on where your focus is and what attitude you choose to bring to this moment. At no point in time has it been more important to manage your mental state and choose where your mind goes and what you are focusing on. The world does seem to be spinning off in all directions. If you are focused on the doom and gloom then that is going to be all you will see. If you shorten your focus and become present in the moment, you will be able to see that you are, in fact, okay. You will also be much more likely to creatively deal with whatever comes towards you personally and still create the life you want.

Whatever is happening in your world at this moment right now you have one tool that is very powerful – the free will to choose your attitude to what is going on around you. In my book *Remembering Perfection* in the chapter "Reality and Attitude" I talk about how the one thing we have absolute control over is the attitude we choose to adopt when something happens in our lives. Right now, when it can feel like everything is outside of your control it is quite useful to feel in control of one aspect.

So choose your attitude. If you are affected negatively by something happening in the world ask yourself what attitude can I adopt that would put me in the most positive mindset to handle this well? Instead of focusing on what is causing you to feel fearful or worried shift your focus to something better. Ask yourself how else might I view this situation? That is a powerful question to ask.

I am not saying don't be informed about the world – that would be irresponsible – but I am saying don't watch the repeats of the bad news all day, every day. Don't drip feed negativity into your life and mind. Get the information that is relevant to your life, deal with it in whatever way you can, and then be vigilant as to where your focus goes for the rest of the day. I have found that by severely limiting my exposure to the news and newspapers I still know what is going on in the world, but I don't choose to talk about it all the time, churn it over with friends how terrible things are and make it my main focus of the day. If you cannot take positive action that helps the situation you are worried about, do not add to it with your fear and worried thoughts.

Often our fears are mental constructs that we get caught up in, and then it can be very difficult to talk ourselves back into calmness and clarity. Once we start to focus on the fear factor the filters in our unconscious mind start to look for evidence of what we are focusing on. That's just how the mind works. With this in mind start to become aware of what you are filtering for and consciously give yourself a new focus. Our attitude to what is happening is a filter too so start to become very aware of the attitude you are approaching your own life with.

These are turbulent times, and to flow with it as smoothly as possible and deal with all that comes, a positive attitude will serve us the best. The present moment holds that calm space, so I invite you to spend some time each day getting in touch with that space within you that is always present. The space where you feel strong and competent and not only ready and able to deal with whatever may come, but also able to go out and create the life you want. In that present moment everything is fine, and only in that present moment are you able to make choices. Choose wisely.



Marsha Egan, CPCU, PCC is CEO of The Egan Group, a Massachusetts based workplace productivity coaching firm. She is author

of *Inbox Detox* and the *Habit of E-mail Excellence*.

## COMMUNICATION

### The Power of Praise

by Marsha Egan

Praise can be a real energizer and motivator. Praise lifts people up, and helps them know what behaviours are appreciated and are desired to be repeated. William James wrote *"The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."*

Just because praising others may sound easy, all praises may not all be equally effective. Here are some thoughts and ideas that you might use to give praise that is meaningful and energising:

**Be on the lookout for opportunities to praise.** We are so busy these days that many times we miss the simplest and least expensive way to acknowledge the achievements and progress of others. I like to challenge people to seek praiseworthy moments. One idea is to do this just before the end of your workday – to think back on the day and take initiative to acknowledge work well done.

**Praise must be sincere.** The only praise that works is that which is heartfelt. You need to believe that the accomplishment is truly worth acknowledgment. Otherwise, it will appear manipulative and carry no credibility. Sincere praise is the only option.

**Distinguish between praise and flattery.** Flattery focuses on what someone has no control over and did nothing to earn, while praise focuses on character, performance or behaviour. An example of flattery might be "Your red hair makes you stand out in a crowd." Praise might be "thank you for your analysis of our project, your recommendation was thorough and on point."

**Praise when you have nothing to gain.** By giving praise and praise alone, you give it higher priority, rather than having it be a transitional "oh, by the way" thought.

**Personalise your praise.** Don't be afraid to use the word "you". Instead of saying "good job" consider saying "you came up with a great recommendation to fix that problem – thanks."

**Praise the behaviour you want to see repeated.** Instead of criticising something done wrong, consider finding people doing something right. This is a way of emphasizing the behaviour you want to see. Instead of nagging a child to clean up his or her room, praise and acknowledge the time that their room is in the condition you seek. Instead of criticising the worker the two times he or she is late for work; acknowledge their repeated arrival for work 15 minutes early.

**Praise can be private or public.** One-on-one comments about a job well done can be very energising. Additionally, public comments in a department meeting, on a task force or in an informal group can also be motivating.

**Be specific.** There is nothing worse than a general statement or a general praising to a group. It holds little meaning. Instead of saying "you all did a great job," you might consider outlining the results, and pointing out specifically how each individual contributed to that result. Specifics are very important in giving any praise. What was it that you liked about her handling of the presentation? What specifically did he do to calm the customer down? What were the specific words that were used that accomplished such a positive result? The more specific you are, the more impacting the praise will be.



Giving praise can be one of the simplest and most motivating actions any of us can do. It takes little time, and costs nothing but a small piece of your time. Unfortunately praise often falls into the category of "important but not urgent". And we lose too many great opportunities to give credit where it is due.

Praise can be a key to better relationships. If you make a point to notice praiseworthy efforts, performance, or results, you can just watch the quality of performance and energy grow.

## I CAN CER VIVE

by Asma Butt




Asma Butt is a Manager at the MD's Office at Sui Southern Gas Company Limited. She was a prominent member of DSSP's Congress Committee in 2014


My story begins with ignorance about my disease that got diagnosed at a later stage. An ovarian cancer diagnosis unfortunately brings to mind grim statistics instead of optimistic ovarian cancer survivor stories. Why? The numbers are discouraging. Each year, approximately 21,500 women are diagnosed with the disease. Last year, an estimated 15,500 died from ovarian cancer. Every woman diagnosed with breast cancer knows at least one Breast Cancer (BC) survivor; she can look to with hope and myriad questions. But ovarian cancer is diagnosed more infrequently and often at a later stage.


This past year I realised how fragile life is. It is a terrible shock to anyone to be diagnosed with cancer at Stage-3. When I got the news in September last year, it shattered me from head to toe. It was the emotional equivalent of being hit by a train, a death sentence for someone. Most people cannot comprehend what the physician is saying, but the underlying tone is that this may mean the end of your life. As a cancer patient, I think of myself as someone who got stuck outdoors in a hurricane. Yes, the battle for survival was tough but I knew there is beautiful sunshine in store for me once the raging storm would pass away. The symptoms were nausea, vomiting and indigestion. After several tests, CT Scans, Endoscopy, Biopsy, the results were positive and tumor was confirmed. The surgeons suggested a sandwich treatment of Pre Chemo, then Surgery and then Post Chemo. The journey was tough but the motivation of my doctors, affection and support of my family and friends gave me incredible strength to fight this battle like a warrior. My belief in God had strengthened to such an extent that I knew for sure that God will not give me anything that I cannot handle.

And now back to the treatment. Chemotherapy was given in nine sessions (three cycles) as per the international protocol and then a major surgery spanning nine hours was conducted. By the grace of God, the spread disease was evenly taken out with few affected organs. When inside the ICU, my doctor told me the good news. For perhaps the first time in many times, I was the happiest woman in the whole world. After the surgery, the post chemo treatment was given and nowadays I am Alhamdulillah well and on the course towards complete recovery.


Today, I am feeling exceptionally good and in great spirits, thanks to my outstanding doctors who treated me so well. The entire team was not only thoroughly professional, but also caring and compassionate as they helped me through the emotional roller coaster that cancer diagnosis, treatment and recovery entails. Apart from the great doctors and the paramedic staff, the Company's CMO and its consultant doctors, my oncologist, the nursing staff, my strong mother, compassionate siblings, family and relatives, my wonderful friends and colleagues, who visited me, stayed with me, counseled me, encouraged me on social media, spoiled me with their cuddles and care, my ex-bosses and retired seniors who had prayed for me, and last but not the least the Senior Management for their tremendous support in my moments of crisis. This entire episode has made me believe that there are wingless angels right on this earth.

 *Stay positive*


 *Ask a lot of questions*


 *If you have a doctor who tries to put you off, find another one who will listen to you*



 *Go for frequent routine medical checkups*

Everybody reacts to a crisis in a different way and everyone has his or her own method of coping with it. When I first heard I had cancer, I obviously went into a state of shock. Once I settled down uncomfortably, I became obsessed with gathering as much information as I could about the disease. When I wasn't googling, I was spending quality time with chemo patients. It didn't take us long to share our experiences with one another and give hope to each other. At the same time, I started concentrating on my diet, knelt down more in prayers and became more polite and kind to the people around me. Believe me, a wonder mix of patience, persistence and positive attitude really works. Living with cancer does not mean you shut yourself from the rest of the world. The more you mingle with people, live a disciplined life and develop a fighting attitude; the chances are that you will overcome all odds. For those interested, I started the Medifast diet that comprised of low-calorie, high-protein plan and it worked. Today, my life style regimen has gone through a 360 degree change in terms of what I eat, drink and how I exercise and pray. Today, I live life to the fullest.


 *Be assertive and be your own best advocate*


 *Live each moment as if it were your last*

Admittedly when you are going through this medical condition, you seem to be stuck in the moment and you can't get out of it. An avalanche of decisions, research, statistics and treatment threaten to bury you. You are paralysed with the gravity of every choice and terrified about making the wrong decision. You will fight with every ounce of your existence, question your doctors and exhaustively research all options. Try to trust yourself to choose. Make the best decision you can and then embrace it with all your might.


 *Value true friendship*

Thank you, friends for providing a steady hand, a strong moral compass and all the love. To those who have to go through the trauma just remember to stay positive, ask a lot of questions and if you have a doctor who tries to put you off, find another one who will listen to you. Go for frequent routine medical checkups. Be assertive and be your own best advocate. Live each moment as if it were your last. Maybe my disease was a blessing in disguise since it taught me life's many lessons such as living life to the fullest, value true friendship, open yourself up to the kindness of strangers and have empathy for all the people. It taught me not to take things for granted anymore. And of course, it made me believe in the miracle of God.

 *Open yourself up to the kindness of strangers*

 *Have empathy for all people*

Surviving with cancer is not the end of my gruesome story; it is the beginning of a beautiful one. My goal is to live a full productive life and give hope to others.

 *Do not take things for granted*

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