

Radio show explores nature of beliefs

Do our beliefs help our evolution or hold us back?

“Defining belief loosely as ‘an acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists’ doesn’t necessarily mean the thing or idea or concept or entity we declare we believe in is true. However, it’s certainly true for the one making the statement. In this context belief cannot be defined, other than as a state of mind,” says radio host Kelsey Collins.

She’ll take on the nature and impact of beliefs in her Saturday radio show on community radio KZSO 94.9.

“Stating we have faith or trust that our beliefs are accurate portrayals of reality has played a significant part of all religions for thousands of years,” Collins says. “But beliefs travel way beyond religions. They can be magical, too, as well as a phenomenon of human consciousness.”

Collins will be joined by Pat Benage, a life coach in Bend, this Saturday on the Kelsey Collins Show, to discuss the subject of beliefs.

The Kelsey Collins Show broadcasts at 9 a.m. at KZSO, 94.9. You can also hear the podcast later Saturday at kelseycollins.podbean.com.

Cancer – a powerful messenger

By Katy Yoder
Columnist

Cancer is telling us something. Each person’s message is different. For some, their bodies hold a genetic predisposition to getting cancer. For others it is environmental. The question is what do we have power over and what is out of our control?

I was genetically tested and know that my breast cancer was not due to genetics. That being said, cancer has been the cause of death for quite a few of my family members. My father, grandparents, cousin and uncle all died because of cancer. I reassured myself by the fact that my father and grandparents were all stricken later in life. But my cousin and uncle were in their 30s and 40s. No matter how I looked at it, cancer was a shadow reminding me that I could be next.

When I felt a lump in my breast I reassured myself that there was no history of breast cancer in my family. I put off having a mammogram or even going to see a doctor because of finances. I put it off until my intuition went from a whisper to an internal scream. By the time I saw a doctor and got the diagnosis, the tumor had grown beyond what would be considered early stages of development.

What caused my breast cancer? I looked hard at my physical state. I have chosen to eat organic whenever possible. But I am overweight. My battle with weight goes back to a tug of war that begins with the irony of my two grandfathers’ professions. My father’s father was a dentist; my mother’s father

was a candy maker.

My maternal grandfather, Poppy, took us to the candy factory on special occasions, allowing us to fill a large plastic bag with any kind of candy we wanted. It was a sweet tooth’s dream come true.

Fast-forward 40 years later and my sweet tooth has become quite picky. I go for the high-end, dark chocolate and organic versions of sugar highs. Either way, I know it’s a case of too many calories and not enough exercise to work it off.

In my younger years, I was a fast-moving, hard-working kid with an entrepreneurial spirit that kept me strong and fit. As I aged and began working in an office, sitting in a chair for hours a day, I started using sweet coffee drinks and afternoon snacks to keep me going when my body just wanted rest. I didn’t realize that there was a day when my habit became an addiction. The switch was pulled and changing was a lot harder than before. I’ve dealt with using food as a means of self-medicating and celebrating instead of a way to refuel my body.

My doctor filled me in on a fact that had eluded me until I was diagnosed with breast cancer: My kind of cancer, which is estrogen fed, can have a direct correlation to being overweight. Excess fat in the body produces estrogen. So being overweight contributed to my cancer.

This was my wake-up call. Cancer was the messenger.

The aftermath of

treatment has made it harder to do what I can to change my circumstances. When I healed enough, I was getting out and walking five to six times per week. I started to have some pain but figured that was just part of getting back into shape. Eventually I realized that I had developed tendonitis that made my Achilles tendons extremely painful.

I’ve learned that after chemotherapy and the start of taking post-cancer drugs to halt the production of estrogen, many patients who try to get back into shape experience the same problems. Both my arms have the potential for lymphedema so I have to wear uncomfortable tight-fitting sleeves from my wrists to my armpits whenever I exercise. This summer those sleeves, coupled with the hot flashes I now experience, made me feel like a pressure cooker.

What I can still control is what I put in my mouth. Some days I do better than others. There are so many emotional repercussions from the cancer experience. I’m taking one meal at a time as I work on controlling how I deal with them.

And there are other complications. Let me tell you, chemo-brain is real and it makes recovery harder. I forget to take my pills, when I have a doctor’s appointment,

and the names of people I’ve known for years.

I’m the first one to admit I’m not the sharpest scalpel on the tray, but I did okay at maximizing my positive attributes and mitigating the challenging ones. Chemo-brain tipped the scales and made me lose confidence in myself. That foggy brain feeling makes it harder to remember to do what I can to get healthy.

But behind all of this belly-aching is a fact I want to remember more than any other. I AM STILL HERE! I lived and have been given the chance to change what I can change and choose a different way to deal with the things I can’t. I am so grateful that I’m alive. I know there are so many who didn’t get the chance I have been given.

When I sink into moments of sadness and loss of hope, I pick myself up by remembering those who lost their lives because of this disease.

Through physical therapy twice a week my tendons are healing. I’m starting to get back out there and walk again. I’ve taken a few steps backwards but I’m at it again. I’m hoping that switching to a different drug that isn’t quite so severe will limit further injuries when I exercise. So, it’s time to put one foot in front of the other and see where it all leads.



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