



The Top Thirteen Things *to Do or Say* and *NOT to Do or Say* to Someone with Breast Cancer

Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up. —Proverbs 12:25 NLT

Janet Thompson / *Dear God, They Say It's Cancer*

DON'T . . .

1. Talk about people you know with breast cancer. Good or bad is not helpful.
2. Tell me God is in control, has a plan, or knew it was going to happen.
3. Say “I’ll pray for you” unless you mean it. I will be counting on those prayers.
4. Say, “Call me if you need anything.” I don’t know what you are willing to do and might be too sick or sad to pick up the phone.
5. Look at me like I am dying. I can read your body language and eyes, and it scares me.
6. Avoid me. It makes me feel rejected, different.
7. Act like nothing is happening, minimize my, situation or compare me with someone else.
8. Tell others, unless you have asked if it is OK.
9. Feel bad if I can’t return phone calls or cards.
10. Be resentful of how my illness affects you.
11. Forget about me after the initial flurry of the diagnosis. This will be a long haul, and I need you.
12. Feel you have to say you “understand” how I feel. If you have not had breast cancer yourself, you don’t understand.
13. Ask me questions like, “Are you having them both taken off? Or on both sides? In fact, don’t ask me any personal questions about my condition.

DO . . .

1. Let me talk about mine and listen.
2. Just show me the love of God.
3. Pray for and with me.
4. Offer to do something specific; then do it.
5. Show genuine compassion and concern.
6. Keep normal contact with me.
7. Take your cue from me as to how, comfortable I am talking about it.
8. Ask me if it is OK to tell others, and honor my wishes.
9. Keep calling and leave a message. I love to hear your voice, and I look forward to the mail.
10. Help me learn to live with my “new normal” that might also change your life.
11. Let me grieve, and that takes time. Stick with me.
12. Let me talk without trying to fix it or feel you have to comment. I might just need a listening ear.
13. Let me tell you what I am comfortable saying. Keep your curiosity curtailed. I will tell you what I want you to know right now.

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