

## The Bad Situation

Kristi Moody

My oncologist sighed, shoved her hands into the pockets of her white coat, and looked straight at me, as if she did not process what I said. I repeated, with a half-smile, “My husband and I want to have a baby, what do you think?” She steeled herself to speak, and finally, several excruciating seconds later, stated: “You already have a child. Why would you risk recurrence during pregnancy that would force a delay in treatment? That could end up being a bad situation.” Her words slapped me in the face. It was hard to argue with her. She was right: chemotherapy and radiation had saved my life. Should I risk having another baby, only to potentially leave my current child, possibly both children, without a mommy?

I met my oncologist 4 years earlier when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003. I had gone home at lunch, hoping for the call (yes, I was informed I had cancer via a telephone call). I did not want to fall apart at work. I waited. I convinced myself to wait until 1:30 and then return to work. 1:30 came, and I convinced myself to stay until 2p.m. The call came at 1:57. I expected to have an out-of-body experience, but that did not materialize. I did scream out in the same breath, “God, do not let me die—and how could you let this happen!” A very immediate and profound sense of abandonment punched me in the stomach. My hands trembled violently as I dialed my husband’s number. He answered. I screamed, “Come Home Right Now!” I hung up with no other words being spoken. As I sat on the staircase, waiting for my husband to race home, a sudden sense of “I will get through this” washed over me. Stillness replaced hysteria. I had hope and I decided to hold on to it.

That hope continued when I learned I was pregnant in January 2008. My husband and I had discussed it for months, years, until we were sick of the topic. I found one London study suggesting post-breast cancer pregnancies increase recurrence, but the study was small and the findings inconclusive. After researching adoption and realizing the difficulties with my medical history, we decided to cling to hope and have a baby.

The next nine months were anxious. I checked my breasts for lumps constantly, obsessed about every body change and compared EVERYTHING to my first pregnancy. On August 27th, my baby sensed my intense desire for the pregnancy to be over and arrived a full three weeks early. Holding her for the first time, the stillness from five years earlier returned. This was not a bad situation. Instead, I had given birth to another healthy girl, with no complications and no recurrences. As I looked into her sweet eyes, I knew that hope had led to this beautiful, miracle baby.