

Pass It On®...

Don't Let a Bad Day Trick You Into Believing You Have a Bad Life.

Allie Newman not only survived cancer but also helps hospitals better meet the needs of teenage cancer patients.

A cancer diagnosis can bring you to the very edge of the cliff. It did for Allie Newman. A bright, athletic 16-year-old one day and a cancer patient the next.

Osteosarcoma isn't a word that should ever be in a high schooler's vocabulary. Allie got very familiar with it. It's a degenerative bone cancer that requires aggressive chemotherapy. She endured 12 months of treatment, losing her hair, her strength and her appetite but never her positive outlook.

Then came the surgeries to replace her hip, her femur, her knee. On top of those were 10 maintenance surgeries. Allie became very familiar with hospitals. The endless trauma can take a toll, rob a person of optimism.

So when Allie found herself on the cliff edge, she had already made up her mind the first day she got her diagnosis. She had decided that she would live and love life, no matter what it brought. Yes, it was hard. But Allie also discovered new friends and the courage to finish college, to travel abroad, to sing at the top of her lungs, celebrate every new year of being cancer free and, yes, jump off literal cliffs. She jumped and screamed all the way down into the cool water. Her head bobbed to the surface, and she wanted to do it all again.

As Allie has realized, life is an opportunity not only to see what we're made of but to help others see what they are made of. "Cancer changes people," she says. "It sculpts us into someone who understands more deeply, hurts more often, appreciates more quickly, hopes more desperately, loves more deeply and lives more passionately."

With that passion, Allie joined Teen Cancer America, an organization founded by rockers Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend that helps hospitals treat teenage cancer patients. Most hospitals don't have special programs or facilities for 13- to 24-year-olds. Yet youth-focused programs and facilities help teenage patients better understand procedures, recover faster and have an overall

better hospital experience. To date, Teen Cancer America has positively impacted 18,000 families by consulting with 97 hospitals and partnering with 30 to award grants.

You never know where your life will lead, what courage and determination you will have to summon. But when you are facing your fears, do as Allie says: "Take a second to smile, and give yourself a minute to truly reflect on all the good in your life right now." And, if you are so inclined, jump off a cliff into the ocean, screaming for joy that you are here, that you are alive, that you can still love.

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