

ACCENT HEALTHYLIVING

INSPIRATION FROM HSN'S 'QUEEN OF JEANS'

'Love your age. Love your life. LOVE YOUR LIGHT'



Diane Gilman in November, just before making her first post-chemotherapy appearance on HSN. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

IF YOU GO

Diane Gilman: "Woman in Power"
National Council of Jewish Women Palm Beach Section will honor HSN's "Queen of Jeans," Diane Gilman, at its "Woman in Power" boutique and lunch on Friday. It's also dedicating its 15th Kids Community Closet (at Heritage Elementary School in Greenacres) to Gilman on Thursday. Community closets are secure closets in public schools stocked with emergency supplies for students.
What: "Woman in Power" lunch and boutique.
When: Boutique, 9:30 a.m. to noon and lunch at noon.
Where: The Country Club at Mirasol, Palm Beach Gardens.
Cost: \$85 for members; \$95 for non-members.
Register: Visit ncjwpalmbeach.org or call Linda Finkelstein at 561-252-5576.



Diane Gilman in May 2017. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

By Jan Tuckwood
The Palm Beach Post

A few weeks ago, Diane Gilman hit a retail milestone: 10 million pairs of her DG2 jeans sold on TV shopping channel HSN. That's 800,000-plus customers with Gilman's initials stitched on the waistbands of their pants. If it weren't enough to boost aging caboose with her super-stretchy skinny jeans, bell-bottoms and bootcuts, TV's "Queen of Jeans" has something beyond spandex to celebrate. She's free of cancer. She's 73 and free, free, free — and that's saying a lot, since last year at this time, she was sitting on

the edge of an examining table at the Dubin Breast Center and asking her surgeon, "Can you save me?" Yes, her surgeon, Dr. Elisa Port, said. Yes. "We'll do everything we can to kill every one of those cancer cells. And, maybe, if chemo shrinks your tumor enough, you'll be able to get reconstruction. Maybe. I can't promise it." That news felt like a miracle. Just before Christmas 2017, a radiologist had told Gilman her mammogram results looked dire. She had ignored her health too long, that specialist told her. "Isn't that just like me to
See GILMAN, D5

Inside, D5: How Diane Gilman 'found diamonds in the dust.'

Today Show expert headlines busy health week in West Palm Beach



Steve Dorfman

For those looking to expand their health, medical and fitness knowledge, this is a great week to be in West Palm Beach. That's because on Wednesday and Thursday at separate venues, nationally renowned experts ranging from the Today Show's Joy Bauer to a half-dozen physicians from Johns Hopkins Medicine will be presenting their latest findings on everything from nutrition, food prep and exercise to brain health, lung cancer in nonsmokers and dementia risk factors. A brief preview of each event:

"More than a Meal" Breakfast benefiting Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches

Not only will this breakfast raise funds for one of the most worthy causes in the county, attendees will be treated to a fun, lively and interactive session with Joy Bauer, the Today Show's resident health, fitness and nutrition expert and author of a dozen best-selling books. "We're excited to have Joy coming to South Florida and to help those attending learn how to tap into the healing power of food," said Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches President and CEO Pamela Calzadilla. Attendees who purchase VIP tickets (\$175) will receive Bauer's latest cookbook, Joy's Simple Food Remedies, and be admitted



Today Show health, fitness and nutrition expert Joy Bauer will be the featured speaker at the Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches fundraising breakfast on Wednesday.

to a post-breakfast meet-and-greet with Bauer, where she'll sign copies. Bauer's Today Show segments have resonated
See DORFMAN, D2

When cutting calories, think exercise equivalents

By Gabriella Boston
The Washington Post

It's almost a month into the new year, and you've stuck with your fitness routine but haven't seen the scale budge. It may be time to look at calories in and calories out - and whether you have a realistic view of that equation. Weight loss is a result of creating calorie deficits in the body, which can be done both by calorie-cutting on the food side and increased energy expenditure on the exercise side. But, as you might expect, there is a human tendency to overestimate how many calories we burn during (and after) exercising, while underestimating the number of

calories we consume. That's where the concept of exercise equivalents - the amount of exercise needed to be undertaken to burn roughly the same number of calories in a food item - can be useful. Keep in mind that these are rough values, and that an occasional indulgence needn't be followed with wind sprints. The best way to think of exercise equivalents is as a tool that can "help make us more aware of what we put into our bodies," as Ben Fidler, a Washington, D.C.-based personal trainer, puts it. Let's consider a chocolate glazed doughnut with
See GOALS, D3

How I found diamonds in the dust

By Diane Gilman
Special to The Palm Beach Post

Cancer is the great revealer. It strips away the veneer of everything that doesn't matter and shines a spotlight on everything that does.

My year-long journey through cancer treatment has revealed so much to me — about courage, compassion, vulnerability and strength — that it has changed the entire mission of my life.

First, about my life ... I'm a fashion designer who built a multimillion-dollar business making jeans for women like me — baby boomers who want to feel beautiful and sexy all our lives. I started out embroidering and distressing jeans for rock stars like Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. Now, I make jeans that stretch, lift and boost boomer women in all the right places.

When I sell my DG2 jeans on HSN — sometimes 100,000 pairs in one day — I tell my customers that my jeans help us “negotiate with Mother Nature.” And they do.

Mother Nature is crafty, though, as I know too well. I couldn't simply negotiate Mother Nature away when I found out I had breast cancer last December.

My diagnosis: Stage 3 cancer in the left breast, with lymph node involvement — and Stage 2 in the right breast.

Here I was, the “Queen of Jeans” — a rock 'n' roll chick with a rebellious spirit, a creative soul and a tough-cookie exterior hardened by years of earning major success in the retail world.

Here I was, facing the battle for my life — and thanking God that I had the entire team of Dubin Breast Center in New York by my side.

Their compassionate care helped me heal my body — and my mind.

With their inspiration, I became determined to fight my cancer with power and positivity.

I developed a five-pronged strategy, a list of five things I had to do to keep surfing on a high spiritual wave in the midst of the cancer tsunami.

This strategy gave me clarity: I was going to LIVE, surrounded by a new community of LOVE, and that's what matters.

I'm sharing my “5 Ways I Found Diamonds in the Dust” with the hope that other women will find light in the darkness.

This has been the most inspiring journey of my life ... and this is why.

I formed my own spiritual family.

Before I had cancer, I had no idea that some people could barely utter that word: “Cancer.”

It's like they thought they would catch it. They didn't know what to say to me. Or they'd burst out crying.

Or, they'd look at me with eyes so sad, you'd think I was ready to gasp my last breath.

None of this helps.

Chemo drains enough energy as it is — it simply became too tiring for me to deal with people who treated me with pity, or treated me like I wasn't me.

I am ME — just me with a disease.

I decided right away I'd turn that pity into power.

No way was I going to let cancer pull me into a swamp, with me feeling sorry for myself.

I learned I had to form my own family — and surround myself with positive friends who lifted me up, gave me energy and filled me with light.

These people showed up miraculously when I needed them, like the universe



January 2018: Diane Gilman with her list of the years, months and weeks she has been alive. Gilman was waiting for her appointment with breast surgeon Dr. Elisa Port at Dubin Breast Center in New York. This was the beginning of Diane's treatment for Stage 3 breast cancer. She had to get 20 weeks of chemo, so she added up how many weeks she had been alive in her 73 years, and that helped her face the chemo treatments. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

handed them an invitation.

When I announced on Facebook I had cancer, 120,000 people clicked on my personal letter and thousands sent me well wishes.

People I knew slightly became my surprise lifelines. They possess that most magical quality: both depth and light.

These angels offer me pure support. They are out there in your life, too ... open yourself to them.

I let go of my vanity.

All my life, I built a shell of vanity around me.

I thought this beautiful shell would protect me.

I thought my extraordinary mane of long auburn hair, my stylish clothes, my youthful skin and my high cheekbones — all of that would speak for me, be my identity.

I thought my image would be my shield.

But all of it was an illusion.

All the external things that had been a method of defense for me, all the artificial stuff — the fake eyelashes, the exquisitely Lasered and Botoxed skin, the size-4 figure that looked so good in my DG2 jeans — all of it had to go.

I could still get dressed nicely for my chemo appointments, buy fabulous wigs and designer hats.

But I had to dump the veneer of vanity.

In fact, my vanity contributed to me getting cancer — because I took hormones to stay looking and feeling young, and those fueled my cancer.

After you begin cancer treatment, you can't afford to be vain. You can't afford to build the bulwark of your personality on how young you look for your age.

I asked my stylist to cut my long hair to a half-inch long when I started chemo. And even though he got emotional with each snip, I didn't cry one tear.

I was fighting for my life. I could not afford to waste energy on something that would grow back.

I had to shed huge defense mechanisms like my long hair — and learn new tricks.

What a revelation this was to me!

To crack open this huge vanity shell ... and reveal the real me.

Without my shell, my vulnerability appeared, and this vulnerability has allowed people into my life who were too daunted to come in before.

This vulnerability has made me truly brave, because at last I can show my true essence.

lawn — seeing everything and flying above it.”

I needed to become an eagle.

I needed to think of my cancer as a small brown spot on that rolling green lawn. I needed to identify it. Target it. And then swoop on over it.

I had to decide that my strength, my power, my energy would rise, and elevate me to my highest self.

I had to do this — because cancer seems so huge and insurmountable.

You can choose your view of it.

Will you be the ant ... or the eagle?

Choose to look up and see the whole vista. It's the only way.

When my mind wanders to fear, when I start to feel small, I look up, feel the lift of air and light — and soar over that mountain.

I focus on what I can control.

I faced cancer treatment like every other foe I've faced in my life: I started with a list.

Here's why:

If I let my mind wander into the wilderness of worry, I'd be overwhelmed. I'd let fear, anxiety and catastrophic thinking drain my energy.

I would literally freak myself out and make myself sicker. What good is that?

Instead, I focused: I made a list.

With a big red marker, I wrote: “20 weeks.”

That's how long I would have to endure chemotherapy.

Under that, I wrote another number: “3,796.”

I turned 73 in August. On my birthday, I had been alive for 3,796 weeks.

Twenty weeks out of 3,796? That's not a big deal. I can handle it!

I do not want to diminish how scary chemo can be. I was scared. I was afraid I'd throw up every five minutes. I wasn't thrilled to lose my signature mane of auburn hair or give up my vanity — that veneer of glamour and artifice I had depended on all my life as a fashion designer.

I didn't want chemo to drain my usual super-energy — and I knew it would.

But I also knew chemo would be over in 20 weeks.

That's just a drop in the bucket when I think of the thousands of weeks I've lived with power and purpose.

And you know what? I didn't throw up one time during chemo! My worst fear never came to pass.

By focusing on my list — it's just 20 weeks! — I kept my mind from wandering, and I kept my attitude positive.

After all, I got a chance to be cured! I get to LIVE!

Twenty weeks of pain for a new chance at life? I'll take it!

I let myself be loved.

The biggest surprise in my cancer journey is this: It has opened me to another realm of love.

I have hugged more people in the past year than in the previous 72 years.

This may sound hard to believe, but I have experienced some of the most rewarding moments of my life since I got cancer.

I believe this new community of love is the result of every step I have taken to deal with this disease.

Step by step, cancer has opened me up to more love.

It has drawn positive, empathetic, caring people to me.

Maybe cancer, the great revealer, took a wrecking ball to the B.S. I had based my life around.

It revealed the me I always wanted to be — the kind, gracious, giving, vulnerable, real me.

The diamond, created from dust.



Diane Gilman last week. [PHOTO BY GENEVIEVE ASCENCIO]

I had to become bigger than myself.

Two weeks before my cancer diagnosis, I had a vivid dream.

I was driving my old VW bug — the one I had when I was a teenager in California — when the road rose up, up, up to the top of a gigantic mountain.

I knew this old car couldn't make it all the way up the mountain. I was scared. The wheels were spinning. Dust filled the air. All I could see was the top of the mountain — and I had no traction to get over the summit.

And then ... just when I thought my car would plunge backward down the mountain, I grew and grew and became a giant.

The giant me broke out of the car and simply stepped over the mountain.

I described this dream to a friend in all its vivid detail the morning after I had it ... and then I forgot about it. Until I got my diagnosis a couple days before Christmas 2017.

My friend reminded me of the dream.

Cancer's the mountain. It looks insurmountable. It feels like my chug-chug VW bug of a body won't ever be able to get up and over that mountain.

But what if ...

What if it's the climb that makes me bigger than I am?

What if it's the daunting incline that makes me grow?

What if I can expand so far, I can become a giant — and just step over that mountain?

My late partner, Jim, used to say, “Whenever something happens to you, imagine an expansive grassy lawn, and realize that you have three choices: You can be an ant, and each blade of grass looks like a forest, so dense and insurmountable you can't see anything ahead of you.

“Or you can be a person, and stand up and look down at the grass, and you can see whatever is in your line of vision.

“Or you can be an eagle soaring above the grassy

GILMAN

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wait until the very last moment?” Gilman says now. “That's so me ... always looking for excitement and drama.”

This was drama she feared and suspected — the tumor in her left breast was so large, the skin was folding in.

She had tumors in both breasts, but only the cancer in her left breast had spread to her lymph nodes. She was not on death's door, as the one radiologist said, but she had danced dangerously close to it.

I was there with Gilman on that snowy day last January, because I am helping her write her life story.

It's safe to say she has skirted disaster on numerous occasions, but isn't that the risk of an electric life? Isn't that the definition of exhilaration?

The faster you move, the harder you push, the greater the rush, right?

She acknowledges it all — and is convinced that her cancer battle strengthens her purpose.

“What is brighter?”

Gilman asks. “A million teeny half-lit particles of light? Or a direct ray of light? Don't diffuse your light, that's what I want women to know.

“Love your age. Love your life. Love your light.”

It's Gilman's honesty that radiates with her customers, says Bobbi Ray Carter, the HSN show host who was first to share a set with Gilman 25 years ago. Gilman's been selling DG2 jeans for the past 11 years.

“Diane creates an environment on national television where women can express their emotions. That is a huge compliment to her,” Carter says. “And jeans are the hardest item for a woman to buy anyway; they're like a bathing suit. For Diane to have sold 10 million pairs, it's clear: What she offers is so much more than a pair of jeans.”

When Gilman announced on Facebook that she was fighting breast cancer, more than 100,000 women watched her video message and she received innumerable good wishes.

She returned to TV in November and her customers flooded the phone lines.

“I took a year out of my life to save my life,” she told them.

Her new hair — a halo of luminescent white — got rave reviews.

On Friday, Gilman will share her story at the “Woman in Power” luncheon held annually by the National Jewish Women Palm Beach section. The organizer, Linda Finkelstein, said she wanted Diane to speak ever since she spent some time with her in May.

“I learned at that meeting that this was a very real person,” Finkelstein says. “She is smart, caring, creative — and what I identify with her is that enough is never enough and age is just a number.”

Group members chose Gilman to be their “Woman in Power” because “she's confronted obstacles in her life, picked herself up and become better from each experience.”

That includes beating cancer — and doing so well during treatment that she could get reconstruction.

Her plastic surgeon was even able to save most of the “winged heart” tattoo she has over her left breast — done by Lyle Tuttle, the same tattoo artist who did Janis Joplin's tattoos.

Why'd Gilman get a red heart with green dragon wings inked over her breast?

That's a story for the book.

For now, Gilman's concentrating on her latest — and best — chapter: “The last chapter of our lives is when all the drama comes to a purpose. Thank God, I've got a chance to have a great finale.”