



Breast Cancer Wellness MAGAZINE



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WHAT
THRIVING
ACTUALLY
REQUIRES

LEARNING TO LIVE, LOVE,
AND FEEL AT HOME IN
YOUR BODY AGAIN

SURVIVORSHIP,
SWIMWEAR & SISTERHOOD

A CONVERSATION WITH

TIFFANY
& TEGAN



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YOU ARE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

A Breast Cancer Journey of Courage, Choice, and Hope

BY KATANA ABBOTT, CFP®



Approximately one in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in her lifetime. Chances are, you know someone who has faced this diagnosis.

In the fall of 2023, I became one of those women.

After my annual mammogram, I was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma and ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). Thankfully, it was caught early, small, and considered highly treatable.

**“WHEN YOU TRUST YOURSELF,
YOU BEGIN TO SEE NEW POSSIBILITIES.”**

Like many women, I was immediately presented with a standard treatment plan: lumpectomy, radiation, and anti-hormone therapy.

When I asked, “What if I choose not to follow that path?” I was told the only alternative would be a mastectomy.

That moment changed everything.

BECOMING MY OWN ADVOCATE

I began asking questions. I started researching. And I quickly realized that if I wanted to explore other options, I would need to advocate for myself.

During my search, I discovered breast cryoablation – a minimally

invasive procedure that destroys cancer cells by freezing them. I learned about it through a book titled *They’re Mine and I’m Keeping Them* by Laura Ross-Paul, who became the first woman in the U.S. to undergo this procedure over 20 years ago.

Her doctor, Dr. Peter Littrup, was still practicing just minutes from my home.

It felt like a miracle.

But after reviewing my MRI, I was told I was not a candidate. The tumor could not be clearly visualized, and without that, the procedure could not be performed.

I was devastated. But I didn’t give up.

BUILDING MY HEALING TEAM

I made a conscious decision to create a team – not just of medical professionals, but of support.

This included:

- My husband, Mark, who stood by me every step of the way
- A patient advocate to help navigate the system
- A naturopathic doctor
- Other wellness professionals

I also made significant lifestyle changes – eliminating sugar and alcohol, improving my nutrition, and focusing deeply on my overall health.

Through a referral from Pink Fund, I connected with the naturopathic doctor who guided me through advanced bloodwork, DNA testing,

and personalized supplementation to support my immune system.

This wasn't about rejecting conventional care — it was about exploring what was possible for me.

CONTINUING THE SEARCH

Months passed. I pursued second opinions, additional testing, and consultations — including with a major research hospital involved in cryoablation trials.

Still, I was told no.

At one point, I even considered traveling out of state and paying out of pocket.

But something inside me said: keep going.

THE TURNING POINT

Then, unexpectedly, everything changed.

After one more phone call — and asking one more question — I connected with a physician in Detroit who did offer breast cryoablation.

This time, I was not dismissed. I was heard.

A new biopsy was performed — and to my surprise, my invasive cancer was no longer present. Only a very small area of DCIS remained.

In July 2024, I underwent cryoablation.

Today, I am cancer-free.

A NEW FRONTIER IN BREAST CANCER TREATMENT

While cryoablation is not appropriate for every patient, it is gaining increased attention and validation within the medical community.

Recent developments — including IceCure Medical's ProSense®

system and the ICE3 clinical trial — contributed to a favorable benefit-risk profile for select low-risk breast cancer patients.

In October 2025, the FDA cleared ProSense® for use in low-risk breast cancer, and the American Society of Breast Surgeons updated its 2026 Resource Guide to reflect this progress.

You can read more [here](#).

These advancements may help expand awareness and access to minimally invasive treatment options in the future.

WHAT I LEARNED

This journey taught me something I will carry for the rest of my life: You must be your own advocate.

That doesn't mean rejecting medical advice.

It means:

- Asking questions
- Exploring options
- Building a team
- Making informed decisions that feel right for you

Every woman's situation is unique.

There is no one-size-fits-all path.

A MESSAGE TO OTHER WOMEN

If you are facing a diagnosis — or supporting someone who is — know this:

You are not powerless.

You have choices.

You have a voice.

And you deserve to be heard.

CONTINUED LEARNING

If you would like to learn more about cryoablation, I invite you to explore these conversations from Smart Women Talk:



DR. DENNIS HOLMES

Breast cancer surgeon and clinical trial leader

Cryoablation in the Treatment of Breast Cancer

WATCH VIDEO



LAURA ROSS-PAUL

Patient pioneer and advocate

How I Kept Them: My Cryoablation Story

WATCH VIDEO

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

One of the most meaningful things I've learned through this experience is that healing — whether physical, emotional, or financial — doesn't happen in isolation.

We need support. We need guidance. And we need a place



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where we feel safe asking questions and exploring what's possible.

That's why I created Unlock Your Financial Power — a program designed to help women navigate life's transitions with clarity, confidence, and support.

While every woman's journey is unique, many of the women I

work with are:

- Rebuilding after a health diagnosis
- Rethinking their financial future
- Or simply asking, "What's next for me?"

If you find yourself in that place, I want you to know: There is a path forward.

And you don't have to walk it alone.

FINAL THOUGHT

This was my journey — not medical advice.

But if sharing my story helps even one woman ask a question, explore an option, or advocate for herself...

Then it was worth telling.



ABOUT KATANA AND SMART WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Katana Abbott is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional, Retirement Income Coach, and the founder of Smart Women's Empowerment, a nonprofit project of United Charitable. For more than 35 years, Katana has helped women gain clarity, confidence, and peace of mind around their money and their lives—guiding them through major transitions such as retirement, encore careers, caregiving, and legacy planning.

After retiring from her corporate advisory career, Katana brought together her lifelong passion for financial education, philanthropy, and women's empowerment by creating Smart Women's Empowerment. Through her long-running podcast Smart Women Talk, her inspirational ezine Smart Women Smart Choices, and her signature course Unlock Your Financial Power, Katana continues to educate, inspire, and support women around the world as they step into their next chapter with purpose and intention.

Katana believes there is no single "right" path—only the one that aligns your values, resources, and vision for the life you want to create.

To learn more or connect with Katana or to learn more about Smart Women's Empowerment, visit www.katanaabbott.com or www.smartwomensempowerment.org.



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Contact Katie Maxwell at katie@thepinkfund.org or 248.762.1510 with any questions or to chat further.

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