

was through this denial of the situation that I missed the true lesson of the cancer experience and now had an opportunity to do it again – properly this time. Dear Jan was brave and endured to the end, always caring and loving her friends as well as all of life. However, she was not stoic but highly articulate in her descriptions of the pain, discomfort, indignities and disappointment she experienced. Jan was inspirational in her eloquent style that meant we friends shared her journey. She also moved me to treasure even more deeply the relationships I have and to reach out to others just as Jan herself invariably did.

The learning through Jan's example, prevented my keeping this cancer journey quiet this time and pretending it was of no consequence – as I did 20 years before. Now I let my husband Warwick come with me to clinics, investigative imagery appointments and follow- up treatments. I also asked for prayer when it was offered and unexpectedly received a bodily experience – in every cell – of infilling of Spirit for which I was and am still, deeply grateful. This was indeed part of a different way.

While I determined to be positive, I eventually shared how badly the post-operative medication was affecting me so that I not only felt so ill I wanted to stay in bed but also doubted that life was worth living any more. After realising my symptoms were side effects of the medication, I chose to terminate the treatment and began to feel well again. Soon after, on my birthday, I was fortunate to hear Mother Maya Tiwari speak and read her books. She is a cancer survivor who has become a healer and a type of guru. Through her I learnt: I am not the mind [or body], I am awareness and I took the Ahimsa (non-violence) vow: I make inner harmony my first priority. This was a very different way for me and challenged old habits of thought and action.

These insights kept me well and happy for many months until eventually I found myself wondering again what I was still here for. I had physically recovered from surgery and medication. I could now look at myself without crying or wishing I hadn't lost my breast. I was well and wanting to be engaged with life again. Not content to be a human being, I tend to be a human doing and now wondered how I could contribute even though I was not teaching any more. While I was glad that I had been able to continue editing a