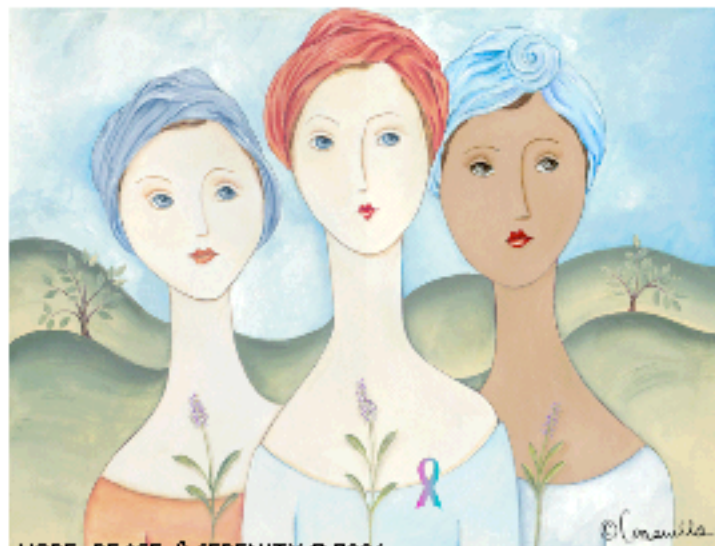


My sister, Consuella (Connie) Molton and I, Tarri Foley were like twins born 14 months apart, she was my breath of encouragement and together we felt like we could do anything. I even graduated from high school a year early so that we could go to college together. A few years later when we both were married and she moved 500 miles away, our relationship remained close. Our husbands understood our connection and never once said anything about our long distance calls, all our vacations together or our extended visits with each other.

One of our phone conversations in the spring of 2004, Connie was telling me of some changes she was experiencing. She said she had gained some weight, felt bloated, seemed to be going to the bathroom more than usual and felt a little tired. We were in our 40's so we thought they might be some premenopausal symptoms but she decided to go to her gynecologist just to be sure. She was diagnosed with a bladder infection and put on an antibiotic. The condition did not get better so they put her on a stronger antibiotic and still there was no improvement. It was not until Connie had blood in her urine almost 7 months later that they considered anything other than a bladder infection. Connie was diagnosed with Stage 3C Ovarian Cancer on October 7, 2004. The first questions we had were, "Why didn't we know about ovarian cancer and why didn't the doctors think of it earlier?" These questions became our motivation to find answers and help inform other women so this did not happen to them.

Connie soon discovered how she could make a difference, a painting she had been working on, Hope, Peace & Serenity during the time she was being misdiagnosed seemed to have a positive effect on people. She realized that it gave women with cancer a sense of unity, peacefulness and hope as they battled for their lives. She wanted to use this art not only to educate women but to inspire women that together we can make a difference.



Connie with her background in advertising, conceived an idea for a program geared to physicians. Connie died on June 17, 2006 before this project was completed but I embraced the project and moved forward. This educational program is entitled Think Ovarian Cancer First Not Last™, and is being introduced in September 2007 during National Ovarian Cancer Month. The program's goal is to generate ovarian cancer awareness through better communication between physicians and their patients, leading to earlier diagnosis. The program also encompasses an outreach program for patients, women need to be aware of ovarian cancer symptoms and make a habit of asking themselves 4 simple questions every month when they do their monthly self breast exam.

MONTHLY OVARIAN AWARENESS

- 1 Do I have pelvic or abdominal pain?
- 2 Do I have urinary urgency or frequency?
- 3 Do I have an increased abdominal size or bloating?
- 4 Do I have difficulty eating or feeling full?

If you have any of these symptoms almost daily and lasting longer than a few weeks you should see your doctor or gynecologist.

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Life happens everyday and we are not always prepared for it but the true challenge is how we respond to it. Connie's response was to embrace those around her with a positive energy that was truly contagious and inspiring. My response is to be informed, make healthy choices, be proactive with my health and to trust my instincts. My sister will always be my breath of encouragement and I will continue to raise ovarian cancer awareness so other women do not have to experience what Connie had to endure.

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