

FIND YOUR MBC VOICE

Michael's Story **Michael Kovarik, living with metastatic breast cancer since 2015**

MICHAEL:

Do you hear that?

That is silence.

Silence used to frighten me.

When I was diagnosed with mBC, it was dark. I couldn't see. I was alone.

It was scary to be diagnosed with cancer but to me,

To hear the word metastatic,

That was terrifying.

Metastatic breast cancer felt bigger than me.

In the early days following my diagnosis it possessed me, it defined me. It erased me.

All my life before cancer, I lived in fear.

I was a people pleaser. I always wanted to be perfect so that people would like me.

I put fear at the head of the line. And I was the last person in line.

But now, my voice was speaking out. I was giving power to those words.

I will not live in fear. I will not live in fear. I will not live in fear any more.

I began to focus on the gifts of my life. My partner Tim, our dog Polar, the walks that Polar and I would have in the fields behind my house.

I began to use my voice more. In talking with my friends, with my family, with my doctors.

It was where I finally got to that place where I knew I could share my thoughts and my feelings.

These relationships grew, because I was now open and sharing all of me.

I have a favorite room in my home and it speaks to me because it is filled with light.

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And in this room in a corner between two windows is a chair.

To me this chair is my safety place.

It is where I sit in the morning with my hands cupped around my mug of tea or coffee.

It is where I begin my day. It is a place that I sit and look inside and just be.

Now when there's silence, it's a different silence.

It's a silence of reflection. It's a silence of meditation. It's a silence of gratitude.

It is no longer a silence of terror. I am exactly where I need to be.

In challenging my fear, I found my voice.

MICHAEL VO:

My name is Michael Kovarik and mBC will not silence me.

I found my voice. Find yours.