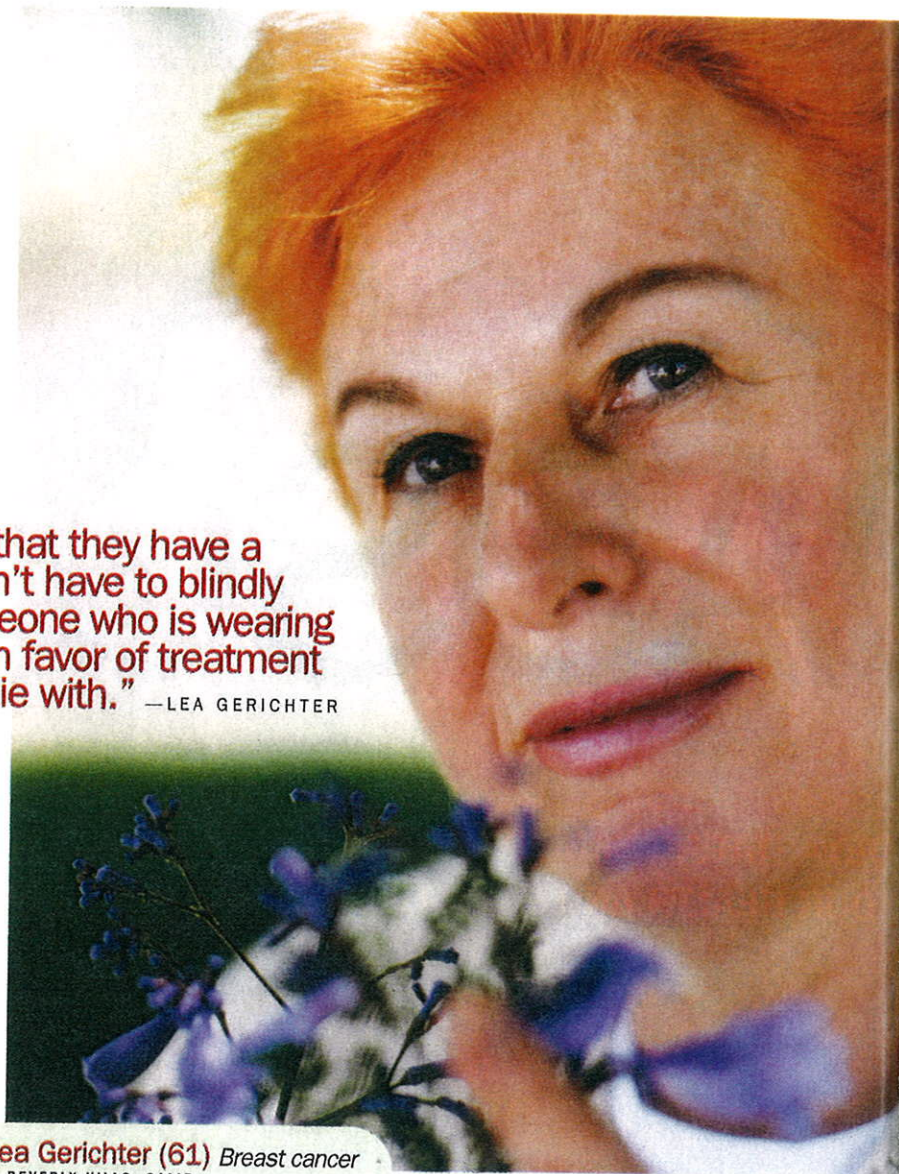


The tendency you have after diagnosis of such a loathed disease is to purge yourself of it by surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. The immediate reaction is to tell your doctor, "Get it out of me. I want to be normal and clean again." Cancer is like that annoying, messy closet or garage that you keep wanting to clean out. If that gets taken care of, you think, everything will be in order. Facing cancer, of course, is far more complex than cleaning out a messy closet. After the emotional upheaval of diagnosis, the ensuing decision-making process of treatment is often a path laden

"I want people to know that they have a choice and that they don't have to blindly follow the advice of someone who is wearing a white jacket, arguing in favor of treatment that millions of people die with." —LEA GERICHTER

with many opinions that offer no guaranteed outcome. Often, your choices are clouded by the opinions of doctors, family, friends and your own fear.

So, how do you make an informed decision? And, how do you survive cancer? There are no easy answers. The following is an exploration of modern-day options, a survival guide for anyone who has been diagnosed. The information has been derived from my own cancer experience, as well as my own research and consultation with cancer specialists and physicians. For me, cancer may have started out as my most feared enemy, but ultimately, it became one of my most valued teachers. It taught me balance, the value of a natural, healthier diet and lifestyle, and even facilitated a dramatic career shift. Currently, as a third-year student of traditional Chinese medicine, I have the unique advantage of a larger perspective on cancer therapies. As I learned when faced with cancer diagnosis, the most important step is to simply slow down and reflect. And, above all, no matter what treatment you ultimately choose to pursue, your decision should be based on hope in your heart and mind.



Lea Gerichter (61) Breast cancer
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.

CROSSROADS After discovering a 2-mm focus of invasive cancer and a suspicious pattern of calcium deposits, conventional doctors recommended mastectomy and chemotherapy. Fearing the toxic effects, Gerichter sought alternatives that supported her immune system.

TREATMENT OF CHOICE A biopsy removed cancer focus. Follow-up included three weeks at Stella Maris, a cancer clinic in Tijuana, Mexico. Immunotherapies included Laetrile injections, lymph massage, coffee enemas and nutritional supplementation. Supplements included selenium, enzymes, Pycnogenol, garlic and vitamins. She now follows a nutritional regimen at home.

RESULTS Appetite returned immediately. Energy returned in six to eight weeks. Four years later, Gerichter reports feeling healthy and living normally.

Two Paths: Fight Cancer or Support Your Body

There are two main branches of thought on treatment for cancer that cancer patients inevitably are forced to consider. One is conventional, and the other can be broadly termed immunotherapy. Conventional medicine's treatment is to attack the disease directly in an effort to beat it back, whereas immunotherapy is about supporting the body's own innate healing system.

Conventional medicine, or allopathic medicine, which is the standard medicine in the United States, literally means "against disease." Instead of treating