

C is for CONQUER

Advance Praise for
C is for CONQUER

“Bobbi’s book chronicles her amazing story through a heartfelt, down-to-Earth voice that we can all relate to. What she has endured and, most importantly, bounced back from, makes for an inspiring tale worth sharing regardless of your personal life experiences. I have known Bobbi personally for a decade at the time of this review and shared in her mission through various community projects. She is an inspiring, fun-loving and authentic person that is out to create change in an increasingly important area for our youth. Her story illustrates these qualities colorfully and I highly recommend it to anyone.”

—**Tudor Alexander**, author, speaker, entrepreneur

“Wow! What a trip! Bobbi’s honest, sincere and detailed way of describing what she went through and how she felt about it, dealt with it emotionally, and analyzed it was amazing. Bobbi’s sense of humor throughout delights. I now have a reference to share with anyone going through the cancer journey to help them on the way through and coming home again to healing and definitely thriving.”

—**Carol E. Becker**, CCht, Dementia Therapy Specialist,
Master NLP TimeLine® Practitioner, Trauma Therapist

“Holy cow... the death of a child, death of a sister and then CANCER! You Bobbi, are a bright star. Thank you for opening your heart, your soul and sharing the raw details of your journey and how you embraced the lessons that came with your diagnosis. You really never know until you know; the devastating side effects of cancer treatment, the emotional toll it takes and the spiritual gifts that come from your healing.

Bobbi reminds us the importance of research, advocating for yourself, the power of natural healing and how stress kills! She graciously and with humor gives you a birds eye view of how a cancer diagnosis suddenly fills your life with doctor appointments, scans, lab work and then collateral damage. Through example, she reminds us the gift of relationships and the value of accepting help. This book is full of great tips, don’t wait until after treatment. Read it now!”

—**Edna Ness**, Best-selling author: *Radical Recovery, Extraordinary Healing with Oxygen and Light after Chemo and Radiation*

C is for
CONQUER
Moving From Surviving
to **THRIVING**

Bobbi Lynn Sudberry



NEW YORK

LONDON • NASHVILLE • MELBOURNE • VANCOUVER

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Published in New York, New York, by Morgan James Publishing. Morgan James is a trademark of Morgan James, LLC. www.MorganJamesPublishing.com

ISBN 978-1-64279-343-7 paperback

ISBN 978-1-64279-344-4 eBook

ISBN 978-1-64279-345-1 hardcover

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018913163

Cover Design by:

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www.r2cdesign.com

Interior Design by:

Bonnie Bushman

The Whole Caboodle Graphic Design

*To Ric and my Children
True Unconditional Love*



In an effort to support local communities, raise awareness and funds, Morgan James Publishing donates a percentage of all book sales for the life of each book to Habitat for Humanity Peninsula and Greater Williamsburg.

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Foreword

Bobbi Lynn Sudberry and I met in December of 2010 in New York City at an event called It's Time to Talk: a day devoted to talking about domestic and teen dating violence. Bobbi was there on behalf of Kaity's Way, a nonprofit organization she founded with her husband, Ric, after an ex-boyfriend tragically murdered their daughter, Kaity, during her senior year of high school in January of 2008. I was at the event as an author and a survivor of teen dating violence, and the juxtaposition of my experience and Kaity's was humbling. Looking into Bobbi's eyes, I knew that Kaity's story had nearly been my own. My role at It's Time to Talk was that of the victim turned survivor while Bobbi's was that of a grieving mother, each galvanized by the notion that our collective experiences could prevent others from falling prey to an abusive person.

As if wading through the waters of unspeakable grief wasn't enough, in August of 2009, the universe handed Bobbi another life to advocate for—her own—when she learned she had cancer. In a style all her own,

Bobbi has chronicled her journey as a survivor of breast cancer, but different from other self-help books, *C is for Conquer* makes the reader feel as if they are sitting with Bobbi in the quiet of a cozy room listening to her remarkable story of survival over a cup of tea. From candid descriptions of her diagnosis, treatments, and recovery, Bobbi shows that the battle with cancer is one she was prepared to win. The lessons Bobbi learns are many, but the one that resonates almost as if a gift is that even with the grief she carries, hers is a life worth living.

In many respects, Bobbi is the phoenix that rises from the ashes—ashes of despair and ashes of surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation. She rises with newfound clarity about how she wants to conduct her life, choose her words, and peel back the shell of defensiveness. Bobbi's new lease on life allows her the freedom to be the best version of herself—a helper—something I surmise we could all use a lot more of: people dedicated to making the world a better place one person and one moment at a time.

—**Elin Stebbins Waldal**, Author of the award-winning book,
Tornado Warning, a Memoir of Teen Dating Violence
and *its Effect on a Woman's Life*, Freeland, Washington

Preface

This book was written with the best of intentions in mind. It is my hope that someone who has had a rough go at it in one way or another realizes they are not alone. Not to mention realizing that things happen, and it is futile to try to control anything or anyone beyond your own self. If we were able to control those things, you can be darn sure things would have been vastly different in my life.

At times my emotions can be very raw, and anger is apparent. Please know this book is in no way meant to hurt or offend anyone intentionally or unintentionally. It is simply an account and expression of my feelings while on a journey not of my choosing. There is no need to read between the lines or assume anything about what I say. I say what I say because I chose to say it. How I say it is how it is meant to be heard and understood. You may also notice I create words of my own to describe things. I do this because I can. Anyone can and if it makes them feel good and it doesn't hurt anyone, they should. I publicly speak about

my trials and tribulations to simply inspire and educate others, as it is my belief that we exist to be happy helping ourselves as well as others.

*“And just as the Phoenix rose from the ashes, she too will rise.
Returning from the flames, clothed in nothing but her strength,
more beautiful than ever before.”*

—Shannen Heartzs

Acknowledgements

Ric Sudberry: you love me so unconditionally and showed me what true love really is, for which I am eternally grateful.

My children: I appreciate your help and patience with me while on this journey. It wasn't easy for me, so I know it must have been a challenge for you.

Dione Lathrop: your friendship, fun times, and help with the editing of this book is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.

Janie Saurette: for loving me all my life despite me being the reason you don't like mustard.

Elin Stebbins Waldal: for allowing me to learn from your experience as well as your honesty. Timing is of the essence and you certainly helped with that.

Chief Jerald Monahan: Thank you so very much for introducing me to Morgan James Publishing. I commend your service not only in law

enforcement but your continued efforts to help others and put an end to domestic violence.

Morgan James Publishing team: you saw this diamond in the rough and have been so gracious to share your expertise to help me to polish it and share it with the world. Your constant encouragement and empowerment while on this journey has been absolutely inspiring for me. Your patience, dedication, and faith in me has been extraordinary and more than I can ever imagine or wish for.

Everyone mentioned in this book: Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

God Bless you all!



Chapter 1

That's Not Right

It was a very hot and muggy evening August 12, 2009. I launched into my daily routine when I got home from work. I changed into my favorite bright yellow, colorful, lightweight house dress I bought when we vacationed in Rocky Point, Mexico in 2004. The memories of that vacation with the kids and my sister, Christy, and her kids made me feel good. At that time in my life, I needed all the good feelings I could muster up. No bra of course and my thick, medium-length, platinum over dark auburn hair was pulled back into a ponytail at the crown of my head. This was my let-it-all-hang-out mode. I headed to the computer room to prepare myself for a conference I am scheduled to attend in about a week and a half on behalf of Kaity's Way, the non-profit organization I co-founded with my husband. In addition to working full-time as an Operations Supervisor for a company that coordinates home health care for patients, I had voluntarily taken on

a mission through Kaity's Way. Kaity's Way is my passion, but the full-time job paid the bills.

As I rose from my desk to retrieve my briefcase, the inside of my upper right arm brushed against my right breast and I felt something odd that stopped me dead in my tracks. So, I poked around the upper right quadrant of my right breast and thought to myself, "That's not right." I felt a lump the size of a quarter. "Okay, it is too late to call my physician, so I will call her tomorrow." I went back to getting ready for the conference, but looking back, how was it that I was able to feel something the size of a quarter as deep in my breast as it was? Weird, right?

Don't get me wrong, this was concerning, but the previous years had been a series of very unfortunate events for my family, so I guess I was somewhat desensitized and figured things just couldn't get any worse ...



Chapter 2

Painful Times

The absolute worst part of the previous years happened on January 28, 2008. Our 17-year-old daughter, Kaity, on her way home from school, was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Kaity was a beautiful young lady who had her whole life ahead of her. She was a senior in her last semester of high school. Kaity was very intelligent and had been accepted to Northern Arizona University, where she was looking forward to studying wildlife sciences.

This ripped us to shreds. As a family we remained steadfast, but inside each of us a hole had been drilled, never to heal over or close. What we knew as normal no longer existed. To this day it still feels like a very bad nightmare we cannot seem to wake from.

Kaity's older brothers had to be flown in from Florida and Illinois. Her younger sister still lived at home with us and was present when the devastating news of Kaity's passing was delivered to us. Her older

sister lived about 20 miles west of Phoenix. Family and very dear friends without hesitation came to our sides to comfort and support us. My sister Lorie, who had recently lived with us off and on for a couple of years was very close to all of us, but she and Kaity had a special little bond as they were starting anew at the same time. Lorie jumped right in and fielded the media for us as we were barely capable of making the funeral arrangements. God bless her for taking on that role, as it could not have been easy for her by any means.

Lorie was also there for me when everyone inevitably had to go back to their lives. She saw the state I was in and made it a point to call me often and come by the house at least once a week, usually Wednesdays, to check on me. She chose Wednesdays because my husband worked the swing shift and was not home until 11:20pm. Lorie watched as I had gone from a very outgoing person to someone who didn't leave the house unless it was absolutely necessary. I would sit on the swing out front and look down the street, waiting for Kaity to come around the corner, as if she was on her way home from school. Lorie knew what I was doing, so she would come over and keep me company.

Lorie was a very bright spot at the time and I really looked forward to her visits. We would sit and talk about anything that came to mind; work, family issues, future, angels, what to do next. Often times she did most of the talking, but I was happy to listen and have her there. She never pushed me or got frustrated with me. Instead, she encouraged and empowered me. She also introduced me to the Four Agreements. At the time, I was not very receptive as I was still trying to figure out why Kaity was gone.

When Lorie and I were kids, we were your typical sisters. I was the serious, needed-to-be-perfect one and Lorie was truly a free spirit. She was the epitome of 'just do it and ask forgiveness later'. Lorie was witty, had a sharp tongue, and was absolutely brilliant. Sometimes we were close, other times not so close. Even so, I was very protective of her. No

one messed with my little sister and when we were older, she would help me out when I needed it, especially when it came to the kids.

There was a period of about five years, 2001 to 2006, in which Lorie and I were not getting along at all. Lorie had battled with substance abuse since she was 16 years old. I believe within that time frame she was possibly very deep into the drug scene. I had become her nemesis because I was on a completely different track and we could not relate. I was raising a family, working full-time, and going to college; pre-pharmacy at the time. In late 2006, about the same time Kaity began her very first dating relationship, Lorie, at our mother's urging—or rather insistence—asked me if she could move into my house as she intended to end her on-again, off-again relationship with drugs. Mom and Lorie both knew we did not tolerate drugs under any circumstances in our household. I spoke with my husband. We discussed the possibilities but felt deep inside Lorie was absolutely serious about her goal to get clean and stay clean. It took a lot of guts for her to ask if she could come live with us considering the distance between she and I. We cautiously agreed to the arrangement and Lorie moved in with us and our two youngest daughters Kaity and Virginia (aka Mooki). Incidentally, this was our mother's way of getting Lorie and I back into each other's lives. Chalk one up for mom here.

Allowing Lorie to move in with us was one of the best decisions we made. It took some time, but she really did it. Lorie kicked the drug habit! I had my sister back and our relationship flourished. Lorie's presence in the house had given our lives a whole new fun-filled dimension. Lorie had a life force like no other. She was still that free spirit. We had some great times while she lived with us. Her presence and mannerisms were so quirky at times that if you weren't falling out laughing because of something she said or did, at the very least she would put a smile on your face. I could go on forever about her, but that is another book I intend to write because life with Lorie was very eventful.

Brace yourself, because here we go with another really unfortunate event for our family. On June 9, 2009, I was at my day job and I received a frantic message from my mother. Something had happened to Lorie. I called my mother back and she told me she is not sure what happened, but a police officer called her and said Lorie passed away and was at John C. Lincoln Hospital off 3rd Street and Dunlap in Phoenix. What the fluff! I had just seen Lorie on Sunday. She looked tired, but seemed like she was okay. Immediately, I fell to my knees and began wailing. I went to the floor in disbelief. My co-workers and boss came to my aid and helped me get to my car. Lorie, 43 years old, had been found in her car, which was parked in front of a small strip mall in Phoenix. We would find out later the cause of death was undetermined, but foul play had been ruled out.

Once again, our family was in the throes of despair and it was everything we could do to keep it together. My mother was so angry, and I could relate. Lorie's kids; a 20-year-old son and two daughters, 16 and 17 years old, were shocked and beside themselves. It was incomprehensible to my brother and two other sisters. We hardly had time to come to terms with losing Kaity and now we had suddenly lost another wonderful person we loved. I remember when I called my husband to give him the bad news. I tried to keep my composure, but was not at all successful. I said to him, "Lorie was now dancing with Kaity in heaven." That was how I saw it then and still see it now. Those two had become so very close and without a doubt I am sure Kaity was there to welcome Lorie.



Chapter 3

What to Do?

At roughly 10:00 in the morning on the 13th of August I was at my day job trying to work up the courage to contact my family doctor. I was hemming and hawing around, but knew I needed to have the lump assessed. The thought that kept going through my mind was; How am I going to go see the doctor and not tell my husband? At least until I found out if there was really anything to worry about. I just didn't want to worry him needlessly. He is my best friend, so I am not one to lie or keep secrets from him. Given all we had been through in the last 20 months with losing Kaity and Lorie, I did not relish the idea of piling on with another issue.

This was where things got a little strange. As I was considering what to do I received a very random text message from our oldest daughter, Yvonne. The message said, "Mom, have you been to the doctor lately?" No kidding, seriously out of the blue that is what she asked me. Baffled by