



# What's Your Shade?

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I promised that I would share my story with other women to help take away the fear of breast cancer and encourage them to get checked. The Lifetime Original Movie "Why I Wore Lipstick to My Mastectomy", based on my book, gives you the motivation to be proactive about your health. Although it is "my" story, it is all of ours. Please share your story with your family and friends. The more we talk about it, the more we can take away the fear. And remember, live up to your lipstick!"



Skye, 8 and Hayden, 1 1/2

Geralyn Lucas was 27 years old, working at her dream job at ABC 20/20, when she discovered a lump in her breast while doing a self exam in the shower. The lump was so deep that the gynecologist could not feel it at first. Pathology confirmed she was extensive intraductal carcinoma and poorly differentiated breast cancer. She could not believe this was happening. It made no sense. She was too young. She had no family history of breast cancer. After a mastectomy, although node negative, she received six months of CMF chemotherapy. Her main concern was "will I lose my hair?"



She dreamed of someday having a child. Could she, after a diagnosis of breast cancer, after chemotherapy? She was told that pregnancy might cause the cancer to come back because the hormones would be hundreds of times the normal level. Even four years after treatment, her oncologist did not give her approval to get pregnant. But Geralyn continued to focus on her goal and the magical reasons to get pregnant such as "trusting her body again, believing in the future, and running toward life, away from death." Today she has two lovely children, Skye and Hayden.



**So, why did she wear lipstick to her mastectomy?** Geralyn explains that she never used to wear it. She was "strictly a gloss girl; that lipstick was reserved for movie stars, rocker chicks, magazine-ad models and other certain types of women." Lipstick means confidence and power. Dressed in her scrubs and her operating room cap before her mastectomy, she carefully applied her lipstick - a red shade that shouted: I HAVE A FUTURE. THIS IS WAR. Her lipstick became a symbol of hope, and a way of holding onto herself.



**Q:** What effect did oncology nurses have on your care?

**A:** “My oncology nurse saved my life. She was my cheerleader. She put me in the mind frame I needed to be in to get my chemo. She was a kind, gentle, smart healer. It is very humbling the people who go into this line of work.”

**Q:** What was your perspective on clinical trials?

**A:** “I so believe in clinical trials. It is the only way that medicine advances. I was one of the first women to get chemotherapy for node negative breast cancer. I tried to volunteer for a trial tracking pregnancy after chemotherapy. I did have testing and shared that with a large group.”  
Geralyn had BRCA1 variant P1238L, which is a breast cancer genetic mutation that can be passed from generation to generation.

“I want to encourage people to join clinical trials if it is appropriate for them. In the 12 years I have been diagnosed all the protocols have changed. It is unbelievable. Everything has changed because of clinical trials.”

**Q:** Were there any long term effects of your treatment?

**A:** “It is a whole new world now. When I was diagnosed, there was one researcher in France and no real protocols. Now, because of this group, women have a choice.” There is a group called Fertile Hope which is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to providing reproductive

information, support and hope to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments present the risk of infertility. Lindsey Beck, founder of Fertile Hope, is dedicated to women to help preserve their fertility; any type of cancer. ([www.fertilehope.org](http://www.fertilehope.org))

“I did not go into menopause. I was told I would have a greater risk of second cancer due to the increase in hormones.”

“I do have chemo brain. There was no such thing as chemo brain when I took chemotherapy. Now there are research studies about it. I have some memory issues I find when I get tired and run down. I have this type of fatigue that I never experienced before chemotherapy.”

**Q:** Do you plan to write another book or do another movie?

**A:** “I do plan to write again and I think this time I would write about watching the people I love go through it. If there is any humor in this, it is that people say, “you know exactly what to say if you’ve had it - but it’s still hard” (when someone is living with cancer). “Even if you are sitting in a room with someone vomiting, it is such a privilege to be there. People say, I don’t want to bother them or disturb them. Just show up. Say I love you; say I am here.”

*“Wearing a ponytail is always a wonderful celebration to me.”*