

*The Telling Of It*  
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**EXCERPT**

I froze in disbelief. At 51, after years of doing self-exams and finding nothing, I was standing in the shower on a December morning, water pouring over me, feeling this thing at the top of my left breast. I was dumbfounded and terrified. Eventually I stepped out of the shower, put on a bathrobe and, leaving a trail of damp footprints, slowly walked down the stairs of our Connecticut house.

Chip, my husband of nearly 30 years, was sitting at the dining room table reading the Sunday newspaper. "I don't want you to freak out," I said as I stood before him and opened my robe, "but tell me if this feels like something to you." With a slightly confused expression, he stood up and gently pressed where I was pointing. His eyes moved from my breast to my face. Not knowing what to say, we stared at each other and then hugged as tightly as we could. We stood like that for a long time before any words finally came out of me: "I'll call the doctor first thing tomorrow."

When you find a lump in your breast, all of a sudden those long waits for appointments disappear, and I was quickly booked with the gynecologist. "It could be a benign growth, a cyst," the doctor said, as he felt the little lump. "Let's get a mammogram and get you in to see a surgeon."

Then things really speeded up.