



Makeup by Rina. Hair by James and Daniel Galvin Jnr

The power of TRUSTING YOUR INSTINCTS

FAST-PACED MEDIA MAVEN CLAUDINE COLLINS HAD TO LEARN TO PAUSE WHEN SHE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER, SAVING MORE THAN ONE WOMAN

words BEATRICE AIDIN photographs KEITH ROGERS

When the managing director of MediaCom Claudine Collins discovered she had breast cancer, she had what could be considered an unusual reaction. She told us, "My consultant said you are going to need an operation. So I looked at my diary and said 'OK how about the 15th of January next year.' It was October. He firmly said no and booked her in for treatment the following week. "Looking back, I was in denial and literally didn't believe it because I had no symptoms."

How the diagnosis came about was due to unusual circumstances. "I happened to have cancelled a work trip so I had two weeks clear in my diary - which never happens!" A reminder letter for a smear test prompted Claudine to visit her GP. "When I was at the doctors for the test I also asked him to check my breasts, which he said were fine. But for some reason I asked him whether he thought I might need a mammogram."

It seemed a strange question to ask with no family history and no symptoms. But at nearly 50 at the time and having recently been on the board of a breast cancer charity fund-raiser, Claudine was keenly aware that early diagnosis is key and paid privately for a mammogram at the Princess Grace Hospital. Her instincts proved right.

"Three days later I was called back in. The mammogram showed five shadows and the consultant sat me down and told me 'You've got early stage breast cancer, but I have also seen something else so you will need to go to Northwick Park to have an MRI scan.'"

"I hadn't thought anything was wrong up to the point where the consultant told me I had breast cancer," she said. Claudine had a lumpectomy to remove the cancer and 21 days of radiotherapy, which she found painful and made her very tired. "I went to stay with my parents in Florida, after my treatment finished in January 2016, for three weeks rest."

Claudine tells a cautionary tale. "I wouldn't have thought of it but when I told my consultant I was going to the U.S. he told me that I must let my travel insurance know about the cancer." Indeed one phone call saved a lot of money as Claudine had side effects of some of the pills she was taking and had to go to hospital. "I was fine but had I not let my insurance know I would have had to pay thousands of dollars."

After returning to work, things had to be dialled down which led to unexpected romance. "I went back to work in February 2016 (found out October 2015) thinking I will not let this define me and I worked myself so hard that I almost made myself ill – and I realised couldn't go out in the evenings with clients as I had always done. For the first time in an incredibly full life I started to feel lonely." A friend happened to call Claudine and suggested a blind date. "I met David and that was it." They married 10th December 2017 and live in London with one of her three adored stepchildren.

As managing director of MediaCom, the media buying agency employs 1000 people overseeing 200 clients with an annual turnover of over £1 billion. Having studied media planning at a Watford college, the best course in the country for media planning, she started as a receptionist and worked herself up the career ladder to the very top.

For the unenlightened what is media planning? "If you have a client, for example, Boots and they want to increase their market share we do a lot of research about how they can do that via advertising whether that is TV, online, press and so forth to achieve that position."

For women the impostor syndrome still exists in the corporate world. "As a female employer we do so much for our women employees such as bolstering confidence and we are starting to do things for men as we want to be inclusive. I remember saying 'Are we becoming a bit too female-focused in our training' but the women do need it. We do an awful lot regarding mental health. All of us, including senior management have had training on it."

Claudine's experience propelled her into action. "It made me think that my friends could possibly be in the same situation, so I made ten of my friends go for mammograms." One friend was diagnosed with Stage One breast cancer. It all goes to show that vigilance is of course vital, but instinct played a part for Claudine with no lumps or indications. Those two weeks clear in her diary and a spontaneous mammogram meant the breast cancer was caught early enough for a full recovery. Sometimes, as Claudine wisely did, you have to trust your gut instinct and never more so when comes to your health.

ABOUT THE BRAND

Nui Ami founder and designer Sanjit Vallance has been personally affected by breast cancer. Not only is her mother a breast cancer survivor of 20 years, but also her pattern cutter of this very chemise, was also diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago.

The special Future Dreams Blush Chemise has been designed to hold a breast prosthesis in place during sleep. This chemise has been carefully crafted with French blush embroidery and the softest Austrian modal silk jersey in order to create a garment which is the perfect fit and has an endless wear-ability. Small luxuries such as this really can make all the difference to elevate morale and boost confidence. This extra special product has been designed exclusively for Future Dreams in order to inspire confidence in women when they need it the most without ever compromising comfort.

NUI AMI



The Future Dreams Blush Chemise modelled by Claudine on the previous page and here by Andrea Pellegrini is available in nine cup sizes from 30-40 B-GG.

You can buy it for £115 at www.nuiami.com with 20% going to Future Dreams