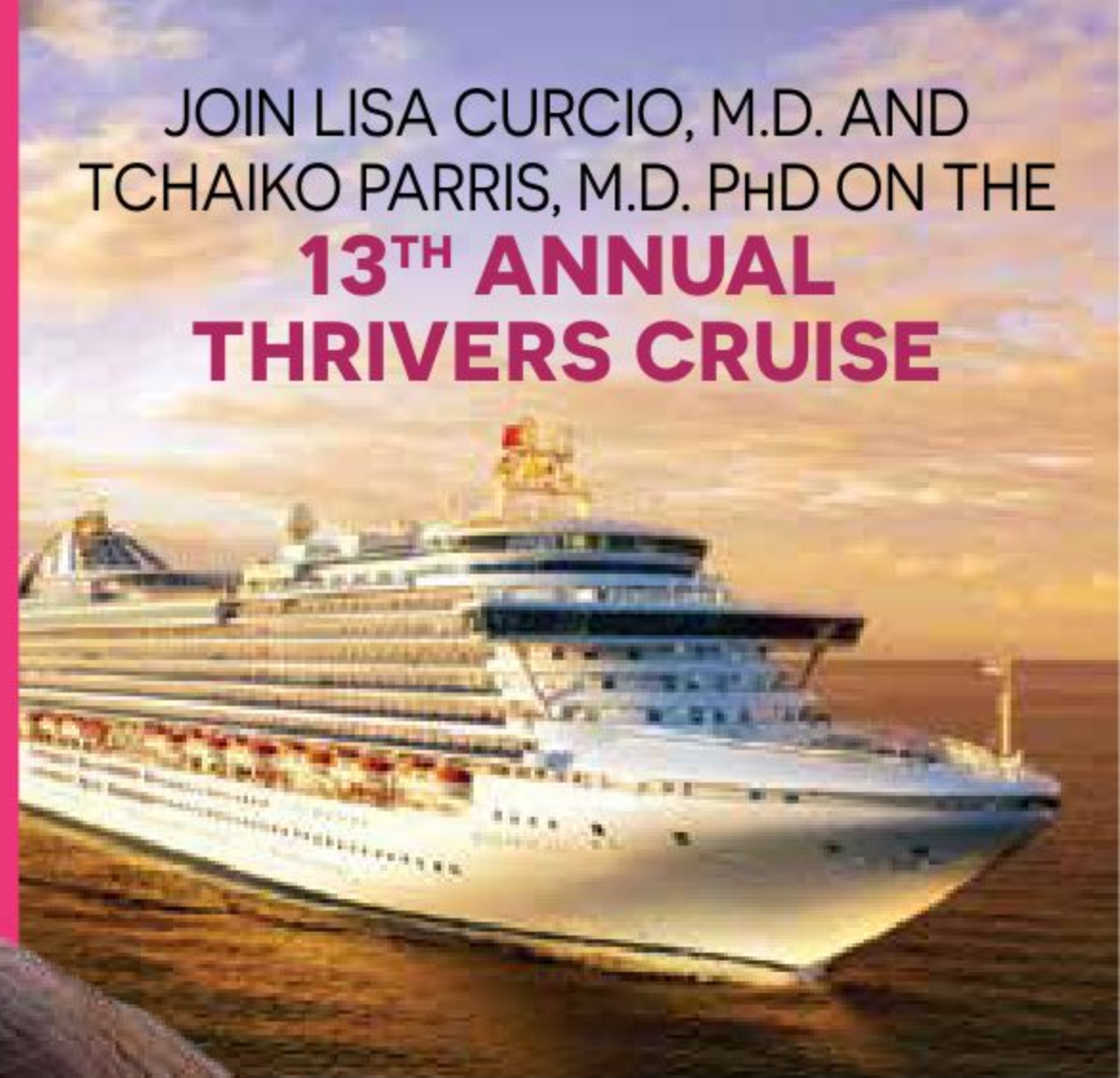




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Samantha Harris

FOUR YEARS LATER

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Samantha Harris

FOUR YEARS LATER

A celebrity's transformational journey to her *healthiest healthy* after diagnosis

BY BEVERLY VOTE

Samantha Harris has had many significant moments and experiences in the first 44 years of her life including:

- Moving from Minnesota to Los Angeles as a young adult.
- Getting her first break in Hollywood by becoming the host of The Next Joe Millionaire at age 29.
- Serving as correspondent and weekend host first for the syndicated show Extra and then for Entertainment Tonight
- At age 32, co-hosting eight seasons of Dancing with the Stars.
- Earning her credentials as a Certified Personal Trainer.
- Achieving her dream of starring in the Broadway show Chicago.
- Appearing on acclaimed television shows and on the covers of national magazines.
- Earning four Emmy nominations.
- Winning an Emmy.
- Marrying Michael, the love of her life.
- Becoming a mom to two beautiful daughters, Jossie and Hilly.
- Finding a lump in her breast Being diagnosed with breast cancer at age 40.
- Going public with the announcement about her diagnosis.
- Taking control of her own health, first by truly learning what good health really meant and then assessing honestly where she fell on that spectrum. This allowed her to participate to significantly reduce the possibility of recurrence of breast cancer or other chronic diseases. She quickly realized that healthy-ish wasn't good enough; Samantha was going for her healthiest healthy.

- Realizing that she must share what she learned from the leading doctors, and health and healing experts and from her own transformational experience to help others in building their healthiest healthy to defend against breast cancer for themselves.

Some may say that Samantha Harris has it all: A fairytale story of a talented, beautiful woman with a beautiful body and a dynamic personality from the Midwest, an exciting and successful Hollywood trajectory, married to a handsome loving husband, two adorable daughters, a beautiful home and loving family and friends who support her. And she was honored with one of the most coveted recognitions of all times in the entertainment industry, an Emmy for her outstanding work.

But she also had breast cancer. It was just four years ago that Samantha Harris faced the overwhelming and horrifying news that she had breast cancer. She had scheduled her first mammogram right before her 40th birthday that determined clear results.

However, just days after getting the results that her mammogram was fine, Samantha felt a lump. She quickly made an appointment to meet with her OB GYN who told her it was normal and just a glandular effect of getting old. After a month, to be certain that everything was indeed fine, she went to her general practitioner who also told her she had nothing to worry about. Her instincts told her she had to be absolutely sure that everything was fine so Samantha scheduled an appointment with a surgical



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oncologist. After having two ultrasounds and a needle biopsy, she was again told that it was nothing to worry about. However, because it was inconclusive what the lump was, the surgeon scheduled Samantha to have her first surgery ever to have it removed and biopsied.

What they learned from the biopsy was that it was actually two tumors. Gone were the hopes that it was nothing to worry about. Because it had spread to her lymph nodes, she was diagnosed with stage II invasive ductal breast cancer. What she also learned and what Samantha wants all women to understand is that it is vital to feel and know your breasts and if you feel anything concerning, do not wait, go directly to a breast specialist and to spread this word to all women. A breast specialist is vital because they deal with breasts every day. In Samantha's situation, the only person who could have known for sure was the pathologist looking at her breast tissue samples. Using the professional services of a breast specialist is an awareness message that Samantha wants everyone to share.

Her first surgery was followed by subsequent procedures including a bi-lateral mastectomy and reconstruction. She entered the pink sisterhood with a newly scarred body, complete numbness in her new breasts and moments of terror and trepidation. A pivotal moment in Samantha's life occurred after what she calls a time of "wallowing in pity" when Samantha said "it dawned on me that it was because I was so healthy that I found the cancer early. Because I was so healthy, I had a lower risk of complications in surgery. Because I was so healthy, I faced a faster recovery and reduced chances that this 8%! would come back. Cancer wasn't going to sour my relationship with my body. I wasn't going to let it."

Outwardly, Samantha appeared healthy and strong but this deception had fooled three medical professionals and the threatening thought of recurrence and her body betraying her again was not acceptable. Samantha's mission became clear - to become the most possible healthiest healthy version of herself. She made the decision to put her journalistic skills to work and glean as much wisdom and knowledge from the country's leading medical and wellness experts so that she would know how to create a new level of health after breast cancer.

Samantha interviewed nutritionists, internists, specialists in integrative medicine and learned how to remove any possible carcinogenic contributors from her environment. She began to realize becoming healthier wasn't about having a hot bod but the relationship one has with their body and how well one cares for their mind and physical being. She learned that many of her "low-fat" foods were actually unhealthy and that cleaning out toxic food, makeup, household cleaning supplies, and toxic relationships from her life were actually within her control.

From this newfound knowledge, Samantha created a road map for the health makeover before her.

Samantha's path to her healthiest healthy began by:

- Resolving to pursue the healthiest lifestyle possible

- Evaluating with real honesty what was working for her and what wasn't

- Committing to taking bite-sized, do-able action steps toward her mission of being authentically healthier and happier.

Another significant decision for Samantha was to go public with her decision to share her health makeover plan and the tools she learned to transform her life. Samantha wrote *Your Healthiest Healthy: 8 Easy Ways to Take Control, Help Prevent and Fight Cancer, and Live a Longer, Cleaner, Happier Life* because "when I searched for one comprehensive guide to tell me what to eat to avoid chronic diseases, how to work out smarter, what toxins to eliminate from my beauty bag and cleaning supplies as well as how to find resiliency, increase my medical knowledge and find my sexy in a time where I sure wasn't feeling it... that book didn't exist. So, I knew I just had to write it! It's the road map I wished so much that someone had given me when I was diagnosed (or perhaps sooner, so maybe I wouldn't have ever had cancer in the first place!). Now, I hope this book will help so many others who are searching for answers and may feel helpless to allow them to take control and thrive!"

Samantha reminds all of us to:

- Celebrate our successes.
- Share our goals.
- And say it out loud every day:

I CAN DO THIS!

Throughout the journey she and her Michael realized they had to make lemonade from the lemons they had been handed. They personally experienced how important support was.



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Five tips to begin to move toward your healthiest healthy:

- 1 Fill at least half your plate full of veggies at every meal — especially leafy greens
- 2 Surround yourself with Positive Pollys as your support squad and ditch the Negative Nellys
- 3 Switch to aluminum-free deodorant
- 4 Switch to 100% organic cotton feminine products (and/or a menstrual cup)
- 5 Take just two minutes (more as you build up to it) to breathe and focus on your surroundings.

Together she and her husband founded the website GottaMakeLemonade.com so that people from all walks of life can share their transformational stories with others as a way to inspire each other and as a way to support everyone who is searching for their path to experience their healthiest healthy.

Share your story at GottaMakeLemonade.com. Visit her @SamanthaHarris on Twitter, @SamanthaHarrisTV on Instagram and Facebook, and at Samantha-Harris.com *Excerpted with permission from *Your Healthiest Healthy*.



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