



# “Today, I feel liberated”

## Singer Anastacia on the fear of cancer recurrence

American singer Anastacia was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003. In 2013, the cancer came back. She has just given a concert in Luxembourg and told in an exclusive interview with the Fondation Cancer how she fought against the fear of a cancer recurrence during the ten years between the two diagnoses.

### How did you deal with the fear to have recurrence after you had the first diagnosis of breast cancer in 2003?

**Anastacia:** It was always in back of my head that it could come back after the first time. A low level of fear always before I would get my bi- yearly mam-mograms, BUT I did not live in daily fear that I would not survive this fate because the early one can find any kind of cancer the higher the percent of remission. I had many years to think about what I would do if this returned. I knew a mastectomy would be the right thing to do for me.

It was the only way I could get rid of the cancer for good. I no longer felt like rolling the dice. Now I feel free of this particular cancer.

### Did the worries ever dominate your routine in the period following therapy or did you succeed in distracting yourself from fears?

**Anastacia:** I honestly try to never let fear dominate anything in my life. I don't have room for fear! haha. I mean, of course there were periods where I was scared. This was a life changing thing happening to me at the time and I was

obviously aware of the circumstances but I tried to focus as much energy as I could into my work and my music, focused on getting better, and put fear on the back burner.

### What were your personal strategies in distracting?

**Anastacia:** My music mainly, to be honest. Getting back into the studio to write was the best form of therapy for me. My family and friends who helped to keep me laughing and see the fun in even the hardest health situations was the best distraction for me.

### Where did you find most help? Your family, friends, fans?

**Anastacia:** I always had a solid friend and family network around me. They definitely kept me going and also you know, my music and writing has always been a driving force in keeping me sane throughout everything. I tried to focus whatever energy I could into writing and I think you can really feel that in some of the songs on *Resurrection*. And without a doubt, my fans gave me so much strength throughout both battles. Their love and loyalty was one of the biggest parts that kept me going.

### From the beginning you handled your disease in a very open way, for example with your video diary. Has this also been a way to distract from fears?

**Anastacia:** Well, the first cancer got leaked to the press within 24hrs so I made lemonade stand out of lemons opting to open my door to what this recovery looked like. I'm very open about everything in my life. This is something that just comes very natural to me. My fans call me 'honestacia' haha. I'm the same person up on stage that I am when I am sitting in my jammies on the tour bus or talking to my fans on Twitter. I don't have that dual personality that some artists have so really being myself and speaking about my illness was never a distraction for me. It's just who I am!

### When the cancer did indeed come back in 2013, how did you feel then?

**Anastacia:** I was actually in the studio writing at the time I got the second diagnosis and you know what, I kept on writing. It was obviously a hard time but I really tried to focus that energy into my music and I think that comes out in certain songs on the album. To be honest hearing about it the second time I was much more prepared for what to do.

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not a Fact.

I knew that I was in for a much longer recovery and healing once again at the risk of my career but knew this decision was the only one for me. I respect that everyone has to make their own personal decision. I have no regrets and feel more passion and love for music and performing than ever before!!

### Do you have a certain message for women with breast cancer concerning the fear of recurrence?

**Anastacia:** Fear is a feeling not a Fact. Don't let this feeling take over. There is help out there. No one is promised tomorrow with or without cancer. Love is the biggest healer, love for self and loving others.



Fotos: Claude Piscitelli

Since being diagnosed with breast cancer, Anastacia has established her own fund, in order to improve early breast cancer screening.