

## Optimism key to empowerment, crowd at breast cancer awareness dinner hears

By Jason Brudereck  
*Reading Eagle*



*Reading Eagle: Lauren A. Little*  
**Wearing a pink flower on her lapel, Sharon A. Henke enjoys dessert with Karen K. Moore on Monday at the third annual Pink Power Night at the Crowne Plaza Reading, Wyomissing. Both women are from Bern Township.**

A woman woke up, looked in the mirror and saw she had three hairs on her head.

She braided them, went out and had a great day.

The next morning, she saw she had two hairs.

She parted them down the middle, went out and had an awesome day.

The next morning, she had one hair.

She wore it like a ponytail, went out and had a fun day.

The next morning, she had no hair.

"Yay!" she said. "I don't have to do anything with my hair today!"

That was how a message of optimism and its power began Monday in a talk delivered by Dr. Dana Lightman to more than 700 women (and a few men) Monday at the third annual Pink Power Night at the Crowne Plaza Reading, Wyomissing.

The dinner, exhibition and speakers were put together to educate women about breast cancer and to empower them.

Lightman, a psychotherapist from Abington, Montgomery County, said optimists have longer lives, less stress, happier marriages and better health.

It's up to everyone whether to be an optimist, she said.

She told the tale of an American Indian who said there were two wolves fighting inside him - one wolf embodied cynicism and negativity, the other was full of love and compassion.

His grandson asked which wolf would win.

"The one that I feed," the grandfather replied.

A person has a choice to be in a good or bad mood, she said.

"People and situations don't produce stress; your reactions do," Lightman said. "It's not the circumstances. It's your interpretation of the circumstances."

She detailed her steps to being a POWER optimist: be proactive, open-minded, well-informed, evolving and resilient.

As for being proactive, she said a situation and a person's response will have an outcome.

If the outcome isn't what was wanted, then the only thing to change is the response, Lightman said.

To become open-minded, she suggested that women change their routines to pay more attention: brush teeth using a non-dominant hand to force focus on the task, or go the opposite way than normal in a grocery store to notice new items.

Being well-informed involves seeing the whole picture and not just one negative aspect, she said.

Women should also evolve into what they want to be and not consider themselves victims of their circumstances, she said.

Building resiliency can be done by making sure one appreciates five things for every negative thing that happens.

For instance, she said, research has shown that marriages last longer for couples who practice that resiliency.

Even when a couple fights, that won't make the relationship a negative one if each partner also appreciates five positive aspects of the other, she said.

The \$10-per-plate dinner also included an exhibition area on diet, exercise, plastic and reconstructive surgery and health-related issues.

The evening was presented by the McGlenn Family Regional Cancer Center at Reading Hospital and Breast Cancer Support Services of Berks County, which said about 300 women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year in Berks.

Lightman had two quick-fix suggestions for those women: Force yourself to smile in the morning if you're in a bad mood and, when your energy is low, put your arms in the air and say, "Yes!"

The audience laughed and cheered as Lightman led them through the cheer three times.

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