

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, reminding us to celebrate the ones we love. But most of us need more than one day a year to remember to honor and cherish those dear to us.

I was telling my husband off in my head the other day. You know the way you vent your frustration with the virtual argument you can win, rather than with the actual one you probably won't, when I suddenly realized that, what I was saying to him, equally applied to me.

I was giving him a verbal bashing about getting all het up over petty things and forgetting the big picture. That beautiful, serene image of a family that pretty much has everything they need in life: health, stability and each other. "My cancer could come back tomorrow" I was shouting, "Why can't you just value what we have. What's going to matter on your death bed? All the joy we shared or how I loaded the dishwasher!

You see, time goes by so quickly. One minute you have all the time in the world and the next it's too late to share the love you wanted to. I recently lost my best friend to cancer. Even though I knew she was dying, I thought I had plenty of time to tell her I loved her one last time. Towards the end, when she didn't answer my email and phone calls, I thought she was just tired. I didn't realize how ill she was, and just maybe, I didn't want to admit it. I had it all planned, what I would say, the last goodbye, the last embrace. But I didn't get to tell her that peace would soon be upon her, that the pain, the distress, the sadness would end and she would soar like a butterfly on the breath of the wind in the majestic skies. At least not when I knew she could hear it.

None of us know how long we have. But that's the problem isn't it? We wait for the special date on the calendar, for the birthday, for Valentine's Day, to tell those in our lives we love them. In the mean time, we grump about the inconsequential or get distracted by the daily grind. Yes, even cancer survivors forget life is precious sometimes.

So don't wait until Valentine's Day to accept and rejoice in your loved ones. I can't take back that time to share with my friend, but I can remind myself, and my husband, that empty toilet rolls, left in the bathroom, can be classed as decorations.

Kay Kerbyson and her family live in West Richland, Wash. She is an Associate of the Los Alamos Council on Cancer, a local and national Cancer Advocate, and President/Founder of Ovarian Cancer Together! Support and resources for cancer patients can be found at www.LosAlamosCouncilonCancer.org and at www.ovariancancertogether.org.