

Liya Epshteyn



This is a picture of me on my birthday at home. I turned 75. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 2005. I found out about my disease in 1998, and in 1999 I underwent a very serious operation. I feel fine, though I am living as if on a volcano, thinking what will happen next. I went through chemotherapy after the operation and it was hard on me. I was totally helpless, could not do anything. I was greatly assisted by the Jewish community of Estonia. The nurse came over, brought me products, cooked for me and cleaned the apartment. I would not have made it if not for the community. It took time for me to recuperate; I do not even want to recollect it. In such a hard time for me I understood a very simple verity: there is nothing more important than life and we have to rejoice in every day we live. I was as if reborn after my operation and understood that there were truly important things to ponder over, without focusing on trifles. I knew I had to do my best to get better. Sometimes I hear the conversation of the ladies in the community and they make me laugh: Dear God, they are talking about the lunch served today! Now I take thinks differently. When I was about to be operated, I was not sure if I would walk out the hospital. Now I look and feel better than most of my coevals, who consider themselves healthy. Your life makes you understand things. There are only two ways - keep to bed and tell oneself that life is over, or fight for one's health. There are no relatives left. There is nobody to look after me. I do not want and I cannot be a burden for anyone. The medicine is expensive. It is hard to get to the doctors. I try to be healthy myself. I strive to take walks more often, go to the community for physical training classes, swim in the sea until the temperature goes down to 13°. When it gets colder, I do not feel like swimming, but I am forcing myself to. Every morning I pour cold water on me. It is hard for me to get used to that, and now I take such treatments not as a necessity, but as pleasure. I try not to take pills, and if needed I take herbal treatment. I feel healthy and brisk. The only thing I understood that I should not make are long-term plans and worry about things which may take place in a year or two. One should live the present day, the present hour and find joy even in little godsend. There are enough joyful moments in our life, we just should strive to see them. We should learn how to rejoice in a sunny

day, first spring flowers, red foliage in fall. We should love all surrounding us, and love ourselves, and only then we have the harmony, and no malady.