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FEATURED MASSKICKER

MAGALI MERTENS DE WILMARS

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Magali Mertens de Wilmars is one of the first mAss Kickers/"post-treatment thrivers" that we met in Belgium! It was great getting to know her and her family. Magali got her [Bachelor's of Law degree from the Catholic University of Louvain](#) in 2003. In 2005, she earned her Masters degree in Communications from the Catholic University of Louvain. After her diagnosis, in 2015, she earned a Masters in Teaching and Coaching from [Elan Vitae Institute](#). We met her on our latest trip to Belgium through [Esperity](#). She will be launching a new online resource for Belgian Cancer survivors soon! We are very honored to take a moment of her time to ask her some questions!

mK: Thanks for doing this Magali! It was a pleasure meeting you and your family in Belgium! First question... How did you find out about your diagnosis? What was your official diagnosis?

MMD: I found out beginning 2011, I was then 7 months pregnant. I was diagnosed with a [head and neck cancer](#). It had spread so fast, I couldn't afford to wait for surgery. So it broke my heart, but [they induced labor 6 weeks before the due date](#). Luckily, my baby daughter was so strong, she could breathe by herself, but still needed to go into neonatology while I was having the tumor removed.

mK: Wow! Glad everything went well! What were your symptoms?

MMD: dry throat, difficulty to swallow and lisp.

mK: How did you get involved with [Esperity](#)?

MMD: After the cancer journey, my husband and I pointed out how we missed a place where to exchange with people having similar cancer (mine is mostly for old and alcoholic male...). One day, I heard [Erard](#) speaking in one of my favorite radio talk show about Esperity. I contacted him and the rest is history.

mK: That happens often! What other organizations are you involved with? What do you do?

MMD: I worked a while with Esperity, and continue to do so. But I wanted to invest myself in what is called life

after cancer. In Belgium, there is nothing really to help you make the transition. I met with a life coach, a game changer. I took a year to be a coach myself, took classes, and here I am, launching a brand new [website](#) in French and offering my service as a coach for patients after treatments.

mK: “Thrivership” is a term we use for a “proactive life after a tumor/cancer diagnosis”. So, what motivates you?

MMD: I went through the journey, and it is still going, you’re never really out of it. **I see cancer as an opportunity to center on what counts.** We are mortal, but I realized it could happen anytime, so I don’t want to waister doing something that is not meaningful to me.

mK: Who is your personal hero or are your heroes?

MMD: I have to say [Mother Teresa](#), because I come from her orphanage in Calcutta. I admire the powerful motherly love she had for all the children.

mK: What makes you laugh, cry, angry?



MMD: My children All at once (hahaha)

mK: Hee hee hee... What would you say is the most interesting thing you’ve ever done?

MMD: It might sound a bit cheesy, but giving birth

mK: What is the toughest challenge a survivor faces?

MMD: Living.

mK: Lets get to know you better... What is your guilty pleasure?

MMD: chips

mK: HAHAHA! Here is another question for you... If you could have a dinner party with any 5 people, alive or dead... who would they be any why?

MMD: Mother Teresa, for obvious reasons mentioned above. [David Servan Schreiber](#), a dedicated scientist and doctor who wrote about cancer and inspired me every day. [Carl Gustaf Jung](#), to exchange on his view about the unconscious. I think I would have enough on my plate with only those three.

mK: Cool. A Philanthropist, The Anti-Cancer guy, and a philosopher/psychologist... What are is next on your agenda?

MMD: The launching of my website the 11th of November.

mK: Any advice for people or loved ones that get daunting diagnoses?

MMD: **In the end, all that matter is love. Don’t lose any day by not spreading it!**

mK: Tell us something about yourself that people probably didn’t know... anything.

MMD: I would love to write a novel one day

mK: Any parting words for all the mAss Kickers?

MMD: If you have any notions in French, go and take a tour of my website sometimes.

Magali Mertens de Wilmars: future novelist, Carl Jung – fan, Dr. Schreiber “Anti-cancer” follower, student of Mother Teresa, chips “snacker”, loving mother and wife, Belgian mAss Kicker, and driven life coach for cancer patients. Thanks for answering our questions Magali. We look forward to the launch of your website [vietcancer.be!](#)