

Creating The Life You Want While Living With Cancer **Book and Website List**

Self-Development and Renewal

The Anatomy of Hope. How People Prevail in the Face of Illness. Jerome Groopman. Random House: New York. 2004

Jerome Groopman, a researcher, hematologist and oncologist, allows us to accompany him on his journey from medical school to the present day, a journey that taught him much about the importance of hope. Spurred on by a 19-year medical difficulty of his own, he becomes intrigued about the science of the brain and it's connection with the health of the body. He points out that a tumor has not always read the textbook, and a treatment can have an unexpectedly dramatic impact. "The great paradox of hope is that because nothing is absolutely determined, there is not only reason to fear but also reason to hope."

The Art of Possibility, Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. New York: Penguin Books. 2000.

This book offers a set of life practices to encourage creativity and the sense of abundant possibilities. The authors ask us to consider whether we're speaking from a state of downward spiral or possibility. Even the small diagrams used to represent those two states made a lasting impression on me. The practice of giving an A has us expect the best from others and ourselves. The practice of Being a Contribution asks us to declare ourselves to be a contribution and throw ourselves into life as someone who makes a difference. Rich in musical metaphors, this is a fun book to read and brings up lots of unique perspectives.

The Artist's Way, Julia Cameron. New York: Tarcher, 1992

This book offers a process to claim the artist within each of us. The author defines a set of exercises to heighten one's awareness of what creative energy is within. She guides the reader through the beliefs that stand in the way of our claiming our full creativity.

The Artist's Way at Work, Mark Bryan with Julia Cameron and Catherine Allen, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1998

Following the format of the first book, The Artist's Way, the author leads the reader through the aspects of creativity at work. He offers exercises and stories of work situations to support looking at what creativity is possible in the world of work.

Callings, Gregg Levoy. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

This book offers insights into how to know the purpose for our lives. Levoy calls that which enables us to live a fulfilling life a CALLING. He explores the process of finding and following a calling using stories and suggested inquiries. This is not a guidebook but rather an exploration of the facets of receiving a call, knowing when to say yes and when to say no to a call and how to proceed when one accepts a call.

Cancer As A Turning Point, Lawrence Leshan. New York: Plume. 1994

This book was written from the premise that cancer survivors need to keep track of what is right with them. He subscribes to the notion that if we are breathing, there is more right with us than wrong with us. In a review from Library Journal, Leshan is said to offer in this book "inspiring, holistic-oriented" advice. I found that his book offered practical ways for survivors to use self-knowledge to make the cancer experience one of learning and satisfaction. He offers practical guidance about being in hospitals, practicing meditation and growing relationships with family and friends.

A Cancer Survivor's Almanac, Charting Your Journey, edited by Barbara Hoffman, JD. National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, 1996.

This comprehensive guide takes you through the fundamentals of understanding cancer, treatments and side effects. It addresses how to work with the medical community, how to take care of emotional, spiritual and social needs and how to take care of business issues like insurance, employment, legal and financial matters. The book offers an extensive resource section including organizations and agencies that offer specific cancer-related resources.

Emotion, Disclosure and Health, James W. Pennebaker. Washington: American Psychological Association. 1995.

Many people chronicle their illness experience in journals. This book pulls together professional articles written to underscore the connection between this type of emotional disclosure of our experience and our health. Findings link immune system health with various ways of disclosing: journals, therapy, general conversation.

Full Catastrophe Living, Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD. New York: Dell Publishing, 1990.

The author writes of the power of paying attention and increased self-awareness as means to healing. He teaches techniques for meditation and mindfulness practice and offers practical suggestions about how to incorporate these practices into daily living. He explores the connections between mind, body and spirit and demonstrates how these connections can help to heal the stress from pain, fear, work, and relationships.

Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Marisa C. Weiss & Ellen Weiss. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

This comprehensive guide is written for the woman who has completed her breast cancer treatment and is ready to move into redefining what "normal" is now. The book details options for coping with the lingering side effects of treatment, issues of intimacy, weight control, boosting your immune system, fertility, pain management, dealing with the threat of recurrence, employment issues, insurance and financial matters. The authors write with a tone of voice that conveys the importance of taking care of self throughout the healing process.

Living Beyond Limits. David Spiegel, M.D.. New York: Times Books. 1993.

Dr. Spiegel's book suggests that the most effective way to heal is to bring our full resources to bear on our experience. Having the mind and body working in partnership enhances the potential for healing. Dr. Spiegel explores the research on mind-body interaction and explains how to use the findings in daily living. He writes about how to build support communities, regain control over one's life, reorganize priorities, work more effectively with doctors and fulfill creative goals.

Now Discover Your Strengths, Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, PhD. NY: The Free Press, 2001

Based upon years of research from the Gallup Organization, this book provides a program to identify individual talents and build them into strengths. A profiling instrument forms the basis of the program and enables the reader to identify predominant themes in their behavior that can translate into personal and career success. The book aims to enhance the reader's self-knowledge as well as to strengthen the reader's capacity to work effectively with different types of people. The book is replete with practical applications of the strength assessments to many facets of everyday life.

Radical Acceptance. Tara Brach. New York: Bantam. 2003.

This book defines radical acceptance as a willingness to experience our lives and ourselves as they are; to quiet the parts of ourselves that claim there is something wrong with us. The author offers practical ideas for building a life of compassion towards others and ourselves. Sprinkled with references to Buddhist practices like mindfulness and meditation, the author urges us to look at the challenges we encounter with fear, pain and grief as opportunities for widening awareness of our whole selves

The Vein of Gold: A Journey to Your Creative Heart, Julia Cameron. New York: Tarcher, 1996.

Written as a follow-on to her book, The Artist's Way, this book amplifies the journey to our creative selves. Written as a workbook of sorts, the author offers tools and exercises to assist anyone wanting to recover their own creativity. The author intended the book to be one of healing and rehabilitation for those of us who have lost our sense of possibility.

What Should I Do with my Life?, Po Bronson, New York, Random House, 2002

This book has nothing to do with cancer but is a fascinating exploration of how people choose to do what they do. The author travels around and interviews people from all walks of life. If you have an idea of some work you'd like to do but think you can't get from here to there, this book may convince you otherwise. Even more importantly, if you are struggling to think of how you can find fulfilling work, you will be interested in the stories of how others wrestled with that question. This book is not a "how to" but rather an exploration of the many ways that people find their true calling.

Zen and the Art of Making a Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design, Laurence G. Boldt. NY: Penguin, 1999.

This practical guide provides a process to follow for those who would like to change how they earn a living. Beginning with exercises to help you clarify your values, interest and strengths, the book continues to provide specific tasks to set new career goals. Tips are offered about how to achieve the goals and guides are provided in how to market oneself. The book includes support for those favoring freelance work, entrepreneurial endeavors, non-profit contributions or corporate work. All the tips use lessons from the traditions of Tao and Buddhism.

http://www.cansearch.org/programs/toolbox_rl.html - read transcripts or listen on line to build your skills in communicating, making decisions, negotiating and gathering information while living with cancer.

<http://www.acscsn.org/> - The Cancer Survivor's Network, sponsored by the American Cancer Society. This site includes helpful tips, stories of inspiration and personal expressions of cancer survivors.

Communication

The Coward's Guide to Conflict: Empowering Solutions for Those Who Would Rather Run than Fight, Tim Ursiny. Sourcebooks Trade, 2003.

Written by a self-professed conflict coward, this book uses interactive exercises to help you examine your beliefs about conflict and the ways that you handle it. The author's use of humor and a practical step-by-step approach can help you to effectively resolve conflict, especially when the stakes are high.

Difficult Conversations, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton & Sheila Heen. New York: Viking Press, 1999.

A difficult conversation is any time you have a hard time talking about something. The authors suggest that during a difficult conversation, there are 3 conversations occurring simultaneously: the "what happened" conversation, the feeling conversation and the identity conversation. The authors teach the reader how to identify each as they are happening and then how to transform the conversation into one where each person moves towards the other to reach a resolve.

Stories of Cancer Survivors Who Renewed Themselves

Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient, Norman Cousins. Bantam, 1991.

Though not dealing with cancer, this is a seminal work about doctor/patient partnerships. Norman Cousins was known as the man who laughed himself out of a life-threatening illness, but laughter was only a part of his approach. The winning combination for Cousins included learning about his illness, using conventional and complementary therapies, and being a partner with his health care professionals, along with a strong will to live and daily doses of humor to help keep his spirits up. "Not every illness can be overcome but many people allow illness to disfigure their lives more than they should. They cave in needlessly; they ignore and weaken whatever powers they may have for standing erect. There is always a margin within which life can be lived with meaning and even with a certain measure of joy, despite illness."

The Cancer Code, Mike & Bettina Jetter with Hobart Swan. Self-published, 2003, Order from cancercode.com

This book reads like a page-turning novel and chronicles the journey of young Mike and Bettina Jetter as they battle Mike's chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) and create the software legacy, *Mind Manager*, a terrific mind-mapping program. It is a story of perseverance (three allogeneic bone marrow transplants and experimental donor leukocyte injections) and of hope. More than five years past the last transplant, Mike and the Mindjet software company are both doing very well. A portion of proceeds from the sale of this book go to Leukemia organizations in the US and Germany.

Equal Partners, Joy Heymann, M.D. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

This is the personal story of a doctor who experienced the harsh realities of being a patient. Due to her experience of being hospitalized and enduring brain surgery, the doctor uncovers what changes are needed in medical care, medical school training and medical research. Her experience led her to advocate for true partnerships in doctor-patient relationships. This is a personal, "inside" story.

Grace and Grit, Ken Wilbur. Boston: Shambhala, 2000.

Wilbur writes the story of his wife, Treya, who lived and died with cancer. He uses excerpts from Treya's journals and his own writing to enliven how the cancer experience impacted Treya, himself as the primary caregiver, and those who were close to them both. Treya's story is one of discovery and courage. The book highlights her determination as well as her acceptance of cancer. Wilbur provides commentary throughout the book about the medical community as well as alternative medicine options.

It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back To Life, Lance Armstrong. Berkley Pub Group, 2001.

This is Lance Armstrong's story of living through testicular cancer. His journey is detailed including the medical treatments he received and the physical training he underwent to rebuild his capacity as a long distance cyclist. Written to include background on his childhood and family relationships, the book illustrates the impact of cancer on Lance's whole life.

Caregivers

Cancer Caregivers: A Resource Guide, Karen Kirzner Adler & Rozlyn Forman Kleiman. UpstreamPress.com, 2001.

This book was produced by a collaboration of two women; lifelong friends from an earlier job, whose husbands were diagnosed with cancer on the same weekend! To help others in similar situations, they compiled a comprehensive resource for caregivers. But it is more than just a compendium of terrific tips, checklists, questions to ask and other valuable information. The book is also full of heart, caring concern and anecdotes from their personal experiences. It's a bit like sitting down to talk with a really good friend.

Love, Honor & Value: A Family Caregiver Speaks Out about the Choices & Challenges of Caregiving, by Suzanne Mintz. Capital Books Inc, 2002.

Written by the president of the National Family Caregivers Association, this book tells the personal story of a caregiver who has cared for her husband for 30 years. The book is a practical guide to the myriad of challenges facing anyone committed to a caregiving role.

<http://www.nfcacares.org> National Family Caregivers Association.

A website devoted to the concerns of the caregiver. Includes the 10 most important tips for caregivers.

Wellness

The 22 non-Negotiable Laws of Wellness, Greg Anderson. San Francisco: Harper, 1996.

Anderson's view is that wellness is a way of living that is governed by 22 non-negotiable laws. He defines each law and offers practical ways to incorporate living by each one. Examples of the laws include the law of stress-hardiness, the law of stewardship, and the law of present-moment living.

Cancer. 50 Essential Things To Do. Greg Anderson. New York: Penguin, 1999.

This is an action-oriented collection of 50 things to do when experiencing cancer. The list ranges from understanding your illness, determining your treatment program, healing your lifestyle, and healing with your mind. The book deals with fundamental, practical ideas of how to begin healing.

The Resilience Factor. Essential Skills For Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles. Karen Reivich & Andrew Shatte'. New York: Broadway Books, 2002.

This book identifies 7 distinct abilities that the authors suggest enhance the ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry. The authors claim resilience is learnable and is very affected by one's thinking style. An assessment tool is offered that enables you to determine your own resilience strengths and weaknesses. The resilience skills are applied to relationships (marriages and long-term relationships), parenting and work situations.

Inspiration

www.inspirationpeak.com

A website to visit for inspirational quotes, music, e-cards and gifts.

Patient Advocacy

www.law.wisc.edu/patientadvocacy The Center for Patient Partnerships helps patients with life-threatening or serious illnesses make informed decisions and get the health care they need and deserve. It provides information and services that are intended to empower the patient. The CPP is an advocate for patient choices and references with health care providers, insurers and other parties.