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Health & Fitness

Anni's Cancer Companion: An A-Z of Treatments, Therapies and Healing
Anni Mathews
Singing Dragon
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Anni's Cancer Companion details how the late Anni Matthews, a most inspiring woman, dealt with her cancer diagnosis and treatment, providing much needed encouragement to those struggling with available treatment options, both conventional and unorthodox. Matthews' memoir is accompanied by a guide to medical terminology, including a wealth of alternative healing suggestions and references for further information.

The neatly organized book has been compiled with patients, physicians, family, and caregivers in mind. Organized as a mini-encyclopedia, it goes from "A is for Acupuncture" to "Z is for Zulu Warrior." In the "C" segment, for example, there are such wide-ranging categories as Chemotherapy, Coenzyme Q10, Cold Cap (for preventing hair loss), Cryotherapy, Crystal Healing, and Curcumin.

Anni Matthews was a London executive who became a one-woman hotline for fellow cancer patients. During her five-year battle with cancer, she often laughed in the face of seemingly hopeless news from her medical team. She underwent orthodox treatment but also advocated for organic food diets and alternative healing methods. When faced with daunting sessions of chemo or radiation, she used prayer and visualization techniques. She describes very frankly her negative encounters with some members of the medical profession and advises both cancer sufferers and professionals to take a more enlightened approach to curing.

One simple technique suggested for those with a cancer diagnosis is to divide a circle into time slots; how much time do you spend on chores, on meditation, on friends? How does one set priorities? Matthews wrote, "My divided circle was pathetic prior to cancer. But becoming aware of the technique enabled me to see at a glance when the division of my time was not balanced …"

Matthews was English and some of the terminology here will confuse the average American reader who may not know, for example, that "hoovering" means "vacuuming" or that

in England, what we call PMS is called PMT (pre-menstrual tension). Most Americans won't have heard of the English-based Gerston Diet or the highly respected Bristol Center for cancer therapy. However, the references for further information list both UK and US sources.

The book is both informational and inspirational. In the segment on Fear, Matthews wrote, "The diagnosis of cancer allowed me to embrace change. And this is the key." The courageous voice behind the facts is what makes *Anni's Cancer Companion* a must-have for patients and care-givers alike.

Barbara Bamberger Scott