

Beating Cancer One Truth at a Time: What You Believe Determines Your Journey

Marianne C. McDonough

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Beating Cancer One Truth at a Time is a compassionate guide for those coming to grips with a cancer diagnosis.

Marianne C. McDonough's *Beating Cancer One Truth at a Time* invites people facing cancer to redefine their mindsets and pursue positive, empowered futures.

A cancer diagnosis is a crushing reality, often filled with fear and helplessness. And cancer's prevalence means that people respond to the diagnosis with a lot of preconceived ideas. This book confronts those common ideas about cancer and, in doing so, relieves some of the helplessness and fear.

The result is a positive, empowered way of thinking—a bountiful gift for those facing the many difficult choices of cancer diagnoses and treatment. Forwarding a whole-person, individualized process for meeting the mental, emotional, relational, and medical challenges of cancer, the book also addresses the network of relationships that can help and hinder life with the disease. Its survivorship chapter is especially vital; it projects a positive yet realistic vision and tackles seldom-discussed challenges, like setbacks during recovery and the looming fear of a relapse.

The book is organized around debunking myths. Each chapter lists commonly held beliefs about cancer, then invites individuals to rewrite the myths in their own way. The myths include “Cancer is so complicated and powerful, we are helpless against it” and “I have to protect my family and loved ones from the truth about what I’m really feeling and going through.” New truths are open-ended throughout, allowing people to uniquely express their beliefs.

At the back of the book, there are examples of ways to debunk the myths—a helpful boost for those who are stuck in the negative view. This is a text that requires its audience to be motivated and able to find the positive; in its optimism, it forgets that some facing cancer may not be able to see through the myths without a group or guide working with them, though.

The tone is measured and calm, empathetic and open—inviting, but not unduly amplifying, the emotions that each reader will bring. Its interactive format walks people through crafting their own beliefs, rather than prescribing a particular viewpoint. There are lots of reflection questions and meditations, visualizations, and other ways to unlock the abstract thoughts and emotions that health-related stress evokes. A manageable, one-step-at-a-time approach fends off overwhelm and keeps the focus on what to do in the moment. The text integrates wisdom from McDonough's own experiences with cancer, but wisely keeps it secondary.

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MELISSA WUSKE (November 5, 2018)

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