

Butter Side Up: How I Survived My Most Terrible Year and Created My Super Awesome Life

Jane Enright

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Butter Side Up is an insightful memoir that draws lessons from Jane Enright's personal challenges.

Part memoir, part self-help work, Jane Enright's enlightening book *Butter Side Up* includes advice for adapting and thriving when faced with disruptive, unplanned changes.

The memoir elements center on a hard year, in which Enright's partner had a traumatic accident and sustained multiple life-altering head injuries. He woke from a coma unable to remember the previous six years of his life. This accident came at a time when Enright was still recovering from the effects of a concussion herself. In the same year, her friend was diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer. As these circumstances piled on top of each other, Enright learned to make decisions that could help her move forward and be happy.

The book's organizing metaphor of bread landing butter side down, rather than up, becomes a way to demonstrate people's inclination toward viewing occurrences negatively, rather than positively. Alternative messages are organized under the acronym OMG (for Outside in Thinking, Mindfulness, and Gratitude), which itself becomes a powerful strategy for handling change and living well.

The usefulness of these values is illustrated with anecdotes from Enright's life, including emails she sent to family and friends updating them about her partner's condition which highlight her perspective and feelings during their troubles. They express gratitude for received support, as well as feelings of uncertainty. Helpfully, they also include details about stages of her partner's treatment and share, in practical terms, how the couple dealt with the changes they faced. The situation improved, Enright asserts, when she decided to regard it from the outside in and to not internalize her feelings.

Narrated with a relentless sense of loyalty, the book's stories and advice are inspiring. Enright is seen holding on to hope even during bleak diagnoses, as well as supporting her partner through memory loss, altered judgment, and other medical conditions. Such tense circumstances are lightened by the inclusion of more humorous incidents, as when, following her partner's memory loss, Enright explains who she is and where they live, and he responds with excitement that he must be lucky to live with her. Recollections of conversations with her friend, and a child's funny comment regarding Enright's age, are also breezy additions.

At the end of each chapter come affirmations, tips on creating vision boards, scans to assess personal strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and advice regarding career planning following possible job losses, and on the benefits of meditation.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (November 30, 2020)

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