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Autobiography & Memoir

Cancer Warrior: Where the Mind Goes
Ruth Levine
Quill House Publishers
978-1-933794-41-9
(April 30, 2011)

"I'm not a patient! … I'm a prisoner of war." These few words summarize Ruth Levine's outlook on her struggle to overcome the emotional challenges of her diagnosis of stage-four colorectal cancer. In *Cancer Warrior*, she chronicles her progress from panic and disbelief to acceptance that "where the mind goes, the body often follows."

After her diagnosis, in a fog of fear and anxiety, Mrs. Levine turned to friends. Though supportive, their responses deepened her depression. Ultimately, she proceeds to take charge of her own physical and psychological condition. She first turns to traditional prayer and Reiki to combat crippling anxiety, then learns all she can about her disease and works within and without the traditional medical community to wrestle control of her situation. Facing an extensive surgery, Mrs. Levine begins a strength-training regimen. As she progresses with her treatment, she moves deeper into herself, seeking an explanation for her suffering and a purpose for her life. By focusing on the connection between mind and body, Mrs. Levine comes to view her cancer "not as an affliction but as a challenge."

Cancer Warrior is not a sugary tale of positive thinking overcoming the odds. It is the realistic story of a woman who is transformed by her reaction to extraordinary circumstances. Mrs. Levine does not hide her physical and emotional setbacks from the reader. She describes in detail the ugliness of procedures and of the side effects and impact of treatments on an individual. Though many face a grave diagnosis, few remain as feisty as Mrs. Levine. In spite of post-operative pain, she begins to dress herself and walk the hospital corridors. When she tires of waiting for a hospital escort to return her to her room after a CAT scan, she "sprints" away in her wheel chair with the out-of-shape attendant in pursuit.

This is not just a story about a woman with cancer. Through this book, Ruth Levine achieves the destiny she sought during her illness—to become an example for others and to raise awareness of cancer and its treatment. More importantly, she guides her adult readers, whether

or not they are cancer warriors, through an examination of the question, Why is this happening to me?

Geraldine A. Richards