**Clarion Review**

**The Unexpected Gift**
Edie Hand
J. Patrick Daugherty
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In The Unexpected Gift, Dr. J. Patrick Daugherty and Edie Hand offer hope and guidance to those who have faced cancer, both as patients and as family members.

The authors have compiled twelve individual stories of cancer patients who learned valuable life lessons from the dreaded diagnosis and subsequent battle. The authors' goal is to inspire other cancer patients, their families, and caregivers to seek the deeper meaning behind the suffering.

Each story is told in a separate section. After a description of their particular disease, the patient tells his or her story. Following that, the authors speak to the lessons learned, the transformation in the patient's life, and the steps that were required to make the transformation. Each section concludes with a poem appropriate to the patient's spiritual journey.

"When a person faces a life-threatening diagnosis of cancer, it produces an intense crisis…" the authors write. "The life-threatening nature of cancer predisposes one to an increased awareness of one's meaning and purpose of life and often brings spiritual matters to the forefront."

The authors delve into the transition experienced by each patient—physical, mental and spiritual. They describe spirituality as the "belief in a power greater than ourselves, which most people in the United States refer to as God." For each story, they identify a spiritual gift, such as learning to live one day at a time, acceptance, new perspective, and inspiring others.

At age thirty-five, Mary Alice, a single parent, was diagnosed with lung cancer and brain metastasis. "In the beginning, it was overwhelming…" she says. "Now I live each day to its fullest. I do the best I can do." Mary Alice demonstrates the gift of a beneficial attitude, which, the authors explain, increases a person's life span and improves quality of life. They offer seven steps to achieve this gift.

Daugherty, a medical oncologist, offers a physician's perspective on cancer, suffering, and treatment. He founded and directs the Northwest Alabama Cancer Center with offices in

Florence and Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and is the medical director of Hospice of Tennessee Valley in Florence. Edie Hand is a celebrity chef, author of more than twenty books, philanthropist, speaker, and businesswoman. She is a three-time cancer survivor and an advocate for cancer research.

These multidimensional profiles of patients, their suffering, and the lessons they learned successfully deliver hope and inspiration to readers who have encountered cancer in their own life or that of a loved one.

*Pat Avery*