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Autobiography & Memoir

Warrior Pose: A War Correspondent's Memoir: How Yoga (Literally) Saved My Life
Brad Willis aka Bhava Ram
BenBella
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War correspondent turned yogi reveals his heart-wrenching journey from cancer and disability to health and happiness.

"Chronic pain is consuming," laments Brad Willis, author of *Warrior Pose*. "It eats away at you day and night." Even with drugs and therapy that temporarily alleviate or mask it, living with chronic pain, he knows from experience, is "like being locked in an invisible prison and continuously subjected to torture."

A war correspondent who never suffered a scratch during years of dangerous assignments abroad, Willis, ironically, was hurt in a fall during a storm while on vacation. That back injury never healed. It crippled him, leading to major surgery, months in a body brace, and the loss of his career. Like some modern day Job, Willis was then told he had cancer. How he survived these trials and turned his life around is an incredibly moving and fascinating story.

Section One of the book is devoted to his life as a foreign correspondent, and in its 150-odd pages he takes his audience along on some rough assignments in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Colombia, Bolivia, southern Africa, and North Korea, among other places. He covers all of these stories while in increasing pain, his back held together by a tight brace, driven by an inner fire to find the story. "Knowing is one thing," as he explains in sentiments familiar to the best in his profession, "witnessing is something else. It touches you in places you never knew existed."

Unfortunately, his promising career comes to a crashing halt as the pain and the pills combine to lay him low. Section Two describes the abyss into which he sinks. Its twelve chapters are intense and moving and heartbreaking—especially when, in his fevered dreams, he hears his two-year-old calling "Get up, Daddy," only to awake and find that the boy and his mother have gone.

Section Three begins at this nadir in his life, and for about half of its thirteen chapters, it

seems nothing will ever go right for this poor man. Then he hears an audio tape of a doctor talking about natural healing, which leads him to a yoga class, then another, and eventually into a life devoted to yoga.

The last fifty pages may strain the credulity of many readers, as it is written in an entirely different voice from the down-to-earth style of the majority of the book. It is the voice of the impassioned convert. The yoga-vegan path and complete change of lifestyle, however, worked and continues to work for Willis, who now prefers to be called Bhava Ram. Once a cancer-ridden cripple with two years to live, the author is now hale and hearty and, most of all, healthy and happy. His is an often engrossing and uplifting story, well written, illustrated with photos, and with a strong cover that conveys his struggle to break free of the prison of pain.

Mark McLaughlin