

When One Door Closes: A Teen's Inspiring Journey and Living Legacy

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"Some people come into our lives and quickly go." These words epitomize seventeen-year-old Alex Graham. Yet, in her short life, she had a lasting impact on all who came in contact with her. *When One Door Closes: A Teen's Inspiring Journey and Living Legacy* is a series of anecdotes from family, friends, and others who were inspired by Alex's courageous battle with cancer. In less than two years she created a legacy not only for her loved ones, but for cancer sufferers everywhere.

The book illustrates the importance of a positive attitude when faced with the uncertainties of cancer. Alex doesn't lose hope, even when all treatment options are exhausted, and she encourages others until the day she dies. She creates a legacy by means of a public service announcement aimed at telling the public not to pity cancer patients. Instead, people should "Try a Smile" when they see these individuals.

When One Door Closes would benefit family members and friends of anyone with a severe illness. Alex's parents show the importance of honesty when children are diagnosed with cancer. Alex is aware of what's going on with her body; therefore, she is empowered because of her knowledge of what's happening to her. She is completely involved in her treatment, asking doctors questions about procedures she receives.

Teenagers can benefit from this story because Alex's friends exemplify the importance of a close network. The Grahams expect people to shy away from them when Alex is diagnosed but are surprised by their growing circle of friends and by the fact that Alex never experiences loneliness. Alex's friends remain close to her on good days and bad ones.

Although the overall message of the book is positive, *When One Door Closes* lets readers into Alex's mind by means of her journal entries, telling readers how she feels about losing her hair to chemotherapy and about her future dreams. This shows that she is still a teenager with vanities and aspirations.

Author H. Thomas Saylor decided to write this book with the Grahams after a chance encounter with Susie. The only drawback of this book is the number of people recounting their stories; many of them share too much background information before talking about their relationship with Alex. However, this book is inspiring for anyone faced with the sudden illness of a loved one, and the brevity of the chapters makes it an easy read.

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