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Introduction

Here in one special book are the prayers, hopes, fears and comforts of women who have had breast cancer and the families affected by the disease. The all-too-common diagnosis of breast cancer can send a woman into such a frightening place that the support of others becomes terribly important—and their prayers essential. This book can turn the “mourning into dancing” for thousands of women.

COKIE ROBERTS
ABC NEWS, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO
AUTHOR AND BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR

C O P I N G





Here we sit—you, the doctor, behind that big imposing desk, and me, the impatient patient, restless in my padded chair.

I have so much to do today! I really don't have time to sit here, but the nurse said you prefer to discuss biopsy results in person.

So here we sit. I must quiet my mind, pay attention. If I pay attention, this meeting will be shorter. Besides, I'm sure everything is fine, just fine...

What?

Your voice sounds so far away—what are you saying?

I have cancer? You are telling me I have cancer? I don't understand. Cancer!

No, no—it wasn't supposed to be cancer. Just a cyst, an innocuous lump...Besides, I feel fine. So this can't be true. It's not cancer.

Cancer?

Will I die? Women do die of breast cancer...

Your voice sounds so far away—what are you saying?

All these statistics you recite—what do they have to do with me? How do I know what these numbers mean? How can numbers tell you anything about my situation?

Your muted words float through space, meaningless words that seem to have nothing to do with me.

Yet I am compelled to listen.

Schedule more tests? I am very busy just now, with many obligations and responsibilities. I don't have the time...

You say we will have to wait for test results to determine treatment?

Wait? I don't want to wait!

I need to know now. I need to know right now, this minute, what this means for me, for my family. I need to know what this means, what to expect.

You say I may need surgery?

You say I may need chemotherapy?

You say I may need radiation?

Your voice sounds so far away—what are you saying?

Can you please repeat what you said about treatments?

This is too much information. I can't think about all this. I can't imagine how I could make time for all that. I am very busy just now, with obligations...and responsibilities.

Let's begin again.

You say I have breast cancer? You say this cancer is in my body, attacking my cells, trying to steal my life?

You sound so far away...

“Doctor, are you sure?”

PATRICIA CORRIGAN
SURVIVOR

God,
Please give me the strength to fight
and the strength to heal.
Please keep watch over my children;
allow them the courage
to endure the stages of my healing.
Thank you
For your loving support and
for the encouragement from those around me.
And guard my sense of humor
so I can maintain balance.
Amen.

KATHERINE WELSH
SURVIVOR

O God,
Since you had counted every hair on my head
(and there were a lot),
Count now my bald head as precious
as was my newborn child's.

SHEILA M. CHIBNALL-TREPTOW
SURVIVOR

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

JOHN 14:1-4

*If in my name you ask me for anything,
I will do it.*

JOHN 14:14

Dear God,
Please put me where you want me to be...
And give me the strength to be there.

SUSAN THOMPSON
SURVIVOR

I would like the Angels of Heaven
to be amongst us.
I would like the abundance of peace.
I would like the full vessels of charity.
I would like rich treasures of mercy.
I would like cheerfulness to preside over all.
I would like the friends of Heaven
to be gathered around
us from all parts.
I would like myself to be a rent-payer
to the Lord; that I
should suffer distress and that He would
bestow a good
blessing upon me.

BRIGID OF IRELAND

One time our good Lord said: *All thing shall be well*; and another time he said: *Thou shalt see thyself that all MANNER [of] thing shall be well.*

DAME JULIAN OF NORWICH

Precious Jesus,

Thank you for bringing me safely
through my struggle.

Thank you for every hard day,
for every tear shed,
for every difficult trial I passed, and
for those I failed.

Each bump in the road helped mold me into
the being I have become today.

You have taught me to stand firmly
for what is right for me.

My trials have brought me to a place where I
can love who I am, and
for that I am thankful to you.

Tears have turned to sunshine on my face, and
my heart is filled with love for my sisters
on this journey.

I am so thankful, Lord, that you spared my life
to help another along the way.
I know I was spared to reach out to some other
frightened soul
who has just heard the dreadful sentence.
I thank you for the chance
to say to her, “You, too, can make it.”
My blessings are too numerous to count;
and I am thankful for them all.
It is with deep love and gratitude
I offer my praise to you, dear Lord.
Amen.

EVELYN STAFFORD DANIELS
SURVIVOR