

CANCER COMBAT

Cancer Survivors Share Their
Guerrilla Tactics to Help You
Win the Fight of Your Life

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WITH A FOREWORD BY DR. SAMUEL WAXMAN AND AN AFTERWORD BY DR.
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FOREWORD

Picking a Path to Recovery That Satisfies Your Personality, Your Needs, and Your Desires

In my twenty-five years as an oncologist, treating cancer in almost every form, I continue to be humbled by this disease, which spares no age group and often strikes with no clear cause. But I have also been impressed and profoundly inspired by the tremendous strength demonstrated by positively focused cancer patients. These individuals are able to rebound from the initial loss of control that comes with a cancer diagnosis and obtain the strength not only to battle the disease on a personal basis but at the same time to inspire those around them in a team effort. The successful journey from despair to gaining control is not only reassuring to the patient but also creates a sense of urgency in the attending doctors and nurses and encourages families and friends to rally around the patient.

What is it that gives these patients the willpower and dignity to wage a successful battle against cancer? That's what this book is all about. It is about how to take control, how to gain momentum from each small victory, and how to rebound from the setbacks. It is about how to become—with the help of your chosen support team—mentally, physically, and often spiritually stronger in standing up to this life-threatening disease.

Cancer Combat is ultimately about gaining a useful and practical perspective in this determined fight for health. Its message is delivered in short, useful anecdotes that make the experience less lonely, less painful, and more positive. The advice of these cancer survivors covers everything from where they sought second opinions and spiritual strength to how they made hospital stays and chemotherapy less unpleasant—and thus more productive.

The insights of these cancer veterans were gained through personal experience. In that sense, they are the experts. Their suggestions—useful to both patients and professionals dealing with this disease—range from little things you can do to counteract the side effects of treatment, like using a plastic spoon instead of a metal one when chemotherapy has given you a metallic taste in your mouth, to ways to motivate yourself to keep up the fight, like figuring out how to maintain your sex life while you're in the hospital in order to remind yourself of some of the reasons why life is worth living in the first place. The stories told here reveal just how remarkably resilient and resourceful people can be.

During the battle against cancer—no matter who you are—there will be times of confusion, uncertainty, fear, and anger, which must be

weathered with the best spirit you can muster. *Cancer Combat* can function as a back-pocket support group to help you take control. If you are facing a certain difficulty, find out how the contributors—normal people just like you—bridged that valley. Their stories may be able to help you navigate the valleys and peaks of the cancer experience and allow you to sustain a more predictable life during treatment. Sure enough, following a tough period, a time of rest and a glimmer of optimism may return to propel you forward.

The book's message is clear, powerful: Not only can you survive cancer, you can emerge stronger and wiser than before. Accept the fact that you have cancer. Make treating cancer a part of your life, but do not let it dominate you. Remain confident and maintain your personal strength and will to fight. Have a sense of humor about it when you can. These are the approaches that stand out in people who are successful.

There is no right or wrong way to carry on this battle. Only your way. The information in this book can serve as a road map to finding your way. Take strength in—and heed the advice of—those who have traveled the routes before you, but pick your own path, one that satisfies your personality, your needs, and your desires. And remember, doctors and hospitals can treat cancer, and mitigate the pain of treatment, better today than ever before. Armed with this knowledge and the insights available to you in *Cancer Combat*, make your experience as life-affirming as possible.

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