

The background is a solid yellow color. It features several white, stylized tree silhouettes with intricate, lace-like foliage and visible root systems. The trees are scattered across the page, with some larger and more prominent than others. The title text is centered and overlaid on the trees.

# Finding the "CAN" in Cancer

*Like a tree...*

*Accept the rain, take deeper root,  
And reach for the sky.*

*A Practical Guide by  
Nancy Emerson, Pam Leight  
Susan Moonan and Terri Schinazi*

**This media kit contains:**

**Press Release**

**Author Biographies**

**Table of Contents**

**Questions and Answers With Authors**

**Excerpts**

**Early Response and Comments**

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## **Finding the “CAN” in Cancer**

*A new handbook for cancer patients and their friends by cancer survivors*

By Nancy Emerson, Pam Leight, Susan Moonan and Terri Schinazi

Four friends, long-term survivors who had more than 70 years of experience dealing with cancer, have put together a guidebook for others who face this illness. The authors combine personal experiences with practical tips for coping with side effects, information on tests and procedures, emotional and spiritual encouragement, and advice on how to let others help during a difficult time.

The four authors, all former patients and/or volunteers at the Duke Cancer Patient Support Center, decided to write a book from the patient and caregiver perspectives, keeping medical terminology and technical details to a necessary minimum. They pooled their knowledge, gained in dozens of hospitals and clinics after countless hours of surgeries, tests, and treatments, to let new patients understand the human side of a serious medical condition. Designed with a “take what you need and leave the rest” ideal, Finding the “CAN” in Cancer allows patients and others to thumb to a particular section that interests them, then put the book down for later reading.

The late Nancy Emerson, a noted motivational speaker and cancer spokeswoman, joined friends Pam Leight of Durham, the late Susan Moonan, and Terri Schinazi, an inspirational and motivational speaker, of Oxford to create this unique book. They emphasize how a positive attitude and outlook can transform one of the greatest difficulties one can face into a path to personal fulfillment and service. The book stresses that for all the physical and emotional difficulties of cancer and its treatment, there is an upside.

Finding the “CAN” in Cancer was written by cancer patients for cancer patients. The authors’ own compelling stories and experiences are intertwined with accessible knowledge of medical procedures and treatments. The authors are devoted to the betterment of the lives of cancer patients, their families, and friends; the book is currently available at only the cost of printing. It is the authors’ sincere hope that Finding the “CAN” in Cancer ultimately will be available to any cancer patient who might need it.

**www.lulu.com**

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# # #

## Author Bios

## Finding the “CAN” in Cancer

### **Nancy Weaver Emerson**

Nancy Emerson, who lived with cancer for more than 20 years, was a noted spokesperson for many cancer-related causes and organizations as well as a successful businesswoman. Recognized as North Carolina’s Most Distinguished Woman in Business in 1996, she focused much of her energy on supporting cancer patients and advancing research. She was a volunteer during the establishment of the Duke Cancer Patient Support Program, and had a long association with the hospital and university, winning a number of awards for her service. She is the honoree of the endowed annual Nancy Weaver Emerson Lecture in Medical Ethics at Duke Medical Center. She served on the board of the National Patient Advocate Foundation, and was *Coping* magazine’s Cancer Survivor of the Year in 2002. She made presentations to the North Carolina Congressional Delegation and President Clinton’s Cancer Panel in Washington, D.C. She was interviewed extensively in both print and broadcast media, including Dr. Robert Schuller’s *Hour of Power* and *NBC Nightly News*. Her commitment and contributions to helping others with cancer survive her with the publishing of Finding the “CAN” in Cancer.

### **Pamela Davis Leight**

Pam Leight has over 25 years of experience being a cancer caregiver, and has been a cancer patient as well. As the daughter, sister, wife, and mother of doctors, she has extensive knowledge of medical practitioners of many kinds. She has previously written a well-received medical index and a toxicology manual distributed by pediatricians nationwide. Her deep spiritual faith has led her to find ways to help those who need assistance, particularly patients with long-term illness. She has been an active volunteer and fundraiser for many causes, including the American Cancer Society. She has been a supporter of the Caring House in Durham, the Kate B. Reynolds Hospice in Winston-Salem, and her family has endowed a scholarship program at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. A close friend and supporter of Nancy Emerson, Pam was instrumental in the inception and publication of Finding the “CAN” in Cancer.

### **Susan Comerford Moonan**

Susan Moonan was a tireless advocate for cancer patients, amputees, and the disabled while battling cancer and its effects for over 20 years. She wrote and spoke often about cancer and surviving in a distinguished career of public service. She served on a number of boards and commissions, and was president and executive director of the United Amputee Services Association. She was an editor of *Amputee Review* and *ACA In Motion*, and a member of the Florida State Speakers Bureau for the American Cancer Society, receiving the Courage Award from the Florida Division of the ACS in 1988. She was a volunteer and volunteer coordinator with a number of patient support organizations. Susan received a Jefferson Award from the American Institute for Public Service in 1991. She contributed to Finding the “CAN” in Cancer as a way to continue her service to cancer patients.

### **Terri Lynn Schexnaldre Schinazi**

Terri Schinazi has lived with cancer for over 17 years. Her energy and enthusiasm have allowed her not only to persevere through her treatment, but also to volunteer in patient support and clinical research. She has been a long-term volunteer with the Duke Cancer Patient Support Program, and was an honored survivor at Duke’s annual Power of Knowledge seminar. She has received a number of honors and awards in the cancer community, including the Maureen Thomas Jordan “Spirit of Survivorship” award from the North Carolina affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and has been a sponsored guest survivor at the national Race in Washington, D.C for the last five years. She has been the opening ceremonies guest speaker at the Relay for Life in Durham, N.C. She has also been recruited by her oncologist to participate as a guest speaker in informational seminars with medical students going through their oncology rotations at Duke and with visiting pharmaceutical companies who rarely get to interact with the subjects of their work. Terri has great hopes for assisting cancer patients by co-authoring and publishing Finding the “CAN” in Cancer. She has formed a 501c3 non-profit organization, called *Wings For A Cure*. This organization has a dual objective: to inspire and encourage cancer patients by extending the message of a positive survival experience, and to provide a hardship service to the cancer community with the distribution of complimentary copies of the book Finding the “CAN” in Cancer to cancer patients.

###

## Contents

Foreword	1	MRI	87
Prologue	3	PET	89
<b>Our Stories</b>		Ultrasound	90
Nancy Emerson	5	Getting Test Results	90
Pam Leight	17	CHAPTER SEVEN – Treatments	91
Susan Moonan	23	Chemotherapy (Chemo)	91
Terri Schinazi	33	Clinical Trials	95
<b>PART I Diagnosis</b>		Trial Phases	96
CHAPTER ONE - Hearing the News/Coping With It		PICC Lines	98
Shock	47	Port (Portacath)	99
Denial	47	Radiation	100
Fear	48	Surgery	103
Why me?	49	Ending a Treatment Phase	111
Isolation/Loneliness	49	<b>PART IV Side Effects... Things That Might Help</b>	
Worry	50	Allergies	115
Anger	52	Anemia	116
Depression	53	Breath, Shortness of	116
What now?	55	Chemo-Brain	117
Two Important Aspects For Emotional Well-Being		Constipation	118
Attitude	56	Dehydration	121
Humor	56	Depression	122
CHAPTER TWO - Telling Family and Friends	59	Diarrhea	124
Telling Your Children	60	Dizziness	126
Your Child With Cancer	62	Eyes	127
<b>PART II Essentials</b>		Fainting	128
CHAPTER THREE - Being a Cancer Patient	63	Fatigue	128
Communicating With Your Doctor	63	Fever	131
When You Have Several Doctors	65	Fluid on Chest	132
Second Opinions	66	Gas	133
How to Let Others Help You	67	Hair Loss	134
Caregivers	72	Hand and Foot Syndrome	137
Keeping a Medical Journal	72	Headache	138
CHAPTER FOUR - Practical Concerns		Hemorrhoids	137
Appointments	74	Hot Flashes	138
Record Keeping	75	Indigestion	139
Medical Directives	76	Infections	140
<b>PART III Understanding Procedures</b>		Itching	143
CHAPTER FIVE - How to Prepare For Tests	79	Lips	146
CHAPTER SIX - Common Types of Tests		Lymphedema	146
Biopsy	81	Mouth	149
Blood work	81	Nails	151
Blood Counts	82	Nausea	153
Bone Scan	85	Neuropathy	154
CAT or CT Scan	86	Nose	155
Chest X-ray	87	Nutrition	156
		Pain	163
		Sex	169
		Shingles	171

Skin	172
Sleeplessness	174
Swelling	175
Teeth	175
Throat	176
Urine	177
Vomiting	177

**PART V Nurturing Your Inner Self**

CHAPTER EIGHT - Looking & Feeling Better

Cosmetics	179
Exercise	180
Wigs	182

CHAPTER NINE - Living Better

Accupuncture/Accupressure	184
Biofeedback	185
Healing Touch	185
Herbal Supplements	186
Massage	187
Music	188
Pet Therapy	190
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	191
Self-Hypnosis	191
Support Relationships	192
Support Groups	193
Visualization	194
Yoga	196

CHAPTER TEN - Personal Resources

Appreciating Time	198
Breathwork and Meditation	199
Personal Journaling	201
Special Places for Nurturing the Soul	203
Work and Play	204

CHAPTER ELEVEN - Spiritual Resources

Acts of Love – Giving and Receiving	206
Faith	208
Forgiveness	209
Gratitude	209
Hope	212
Prayer	212

**PART VI Upstaging**

CHAPTER TWELVE –

Surviving Stage IV and Thriving At Stage V	217
Recurrence	217
Living With Cancer as a Chronic Disease	218
Epilogue	223
Acknowledgements	224
Resources	225
Index	231

- ▶ As cancer survivors, have you felt that positive messages for patients diagnosed with cancer have been lacking?

*PL:* No, but I don't think that there can be too many encouraging words. Everyone can use encouraging words and positive responses.

*TS:* There isn't much positive about being diagnosed with cancer. However, having access to a support group or survivors who have had similar experiences can help to minimize the fear of the unknown. Our book helps to provide this when resources might not be available, or in the privacy of your own home.

- ▶ Can you explain the significance of the title of your book?

*PL:* It was a phrase that came to Nancy during a difficult time after her initial diagnosis. In the story she tells in the book, she tells how she visualized the word “cancer” in her mind and saw and focused on the first three letters. She realized it was a message from God to look for the things you **can** do in your life when you have cancer and always to look for the good things that come from bad.

*TS:* There can be many good things that result from the experience of cancer. Usually they can't be seen as they happen during such a difficult time. If you can, try to look at your situation optimistically; you may fulfill a part of your life you never otherwise would have known. There is a “CAN” in most every situation; you just have to look with different eyes.

- ▶ How did the four of you decide that Finding the “CAN” in Cancer was the best way to share your experiences with other patients, their families, and friends?

*PL:* It grew out of an idea with Nancy and Susan and me during treatment. We wanted to be able to share with others all the helpful tips, practical information, encouragement, advice and knowledge that we had gained through very hard lessons so that they wouldn't have to undergo the same difficulties. Since we knew that we couldn't be there in person to help everyone, we realized that we needed to put it in writing so that we could help people we wouldn't be able to reach otherwise.

*TS:* Separately, we were encouraged by many people to chronicle our experiences and offer it in the form of a book. We came together and agreed that with each other's help, we could share our knowledge in a comprehensive guide to help others with the things we had to figure out on our own.

- ▶ Can you describe the creative process, and the difficulties of coordinating the efforts of four people with families and/or careers who are also undergoing cancer treatment?

*PL:* It was quite a challenge, to say the least. Cancer continued to interrupt our efforts. We realized that, indeed, that was a metaphor for our lives- - that despite all difficulties we faced, including computer glitches, time problems, coordinating surgeries and family, we had to continue living. This book was so important to us that we were determined that nothing would keep it from going forward.

*TS:* It was difficult when three of us were going through treatment at the same time. We had made commitments to each other and were dedicated to the importance of that commitment. We all knew that this would be part of a

( more )

legacy left behind. It was sometimes more convenient to meet in the treatment room; we would schedule our treatments at the same time and drag our IV poles wherever we needed to be. We had already experienced countless treatments and gone through many cancer phases in our lives. We chose to focus on what we were capable of doing and had fun in the process.

- ▶ This book combines your personal stories and running commentary about your experiences with a practical guide to the “nuts and bolts” of cancer diagnosis and treatment. How did you arrive at this structure?

**PL:** Basically, it was through collaboration among the four authors. We knew that we wanted to give practical advice and information that would be a real help to people. We realized that in order for them to recognize the authority with which we spoke, it was important to understand our stories, so they would know that we had been there and lived it! It was not just abstract advice or simple words to us.

**TS:** There were so many personal experiences that were not included in “our stories” in the beginning of the book. Pam and I decided when we began writing, after Susan and Nancy had passed, that it would be fitting to include individual expressions where appropriate. The book is written as a guide with specific suggestions given in our voices; it offers the reader a warmer and personal touch.

- ▶ In the process of describing your experiences with things like side effects and psychological wear-and-tear to readers, you’ve revealed some very personal information. As writers, did you find this difficult, or enlightening, or some combination of these?

**PL:** I would say a combination. For some people, it is more difficult to reveal themselves. For me personally, it was somewhat difficult because it is an intimate and personal revelation of who you are. But my overriding concern was to use my experience to help other people, and therefore my personal feelings were secondary.

**TS:** The process of describing these experiences for me was not so much difficult as it was healing.

- ▶ You speak at several points in the book of the role of spirituality in helping you to deal with the experience of cancer and in motivating you to look beyond it. Has the writing of this book changed your perspective, and do you think the book will resonate as deeply with those less religiously inclined?

**PL:** It hasn’t changed my perspective, but it has deepened my faith. I trust that it will mean what it’s supposed to mean to people as they receive it. I can only know my heart in wanting to give comfort to people, if I could.

**TS:** Whenever anyone feels vulnerable, as is often the case after diagnosis, and they are open in their thoughts and hearts, the book will do what it was intended to do. It’s a practical guide whether someone is spiritual or not and it’s resonance depends on the person receiving it.

- ▶ Even though this book is not technically a medical text, great pains were taken with the Resource and Index sections. Though the average reader may not appreciate them, can you explain why these were important?

**PL:** Because it’s valuable information to those who are interested in knowing more about this disease, and making good resource material available will allow it to be used at any time should someone wish to go further in finding out about cancer.

( more )

**TS:** The book was structured to pick up and use when necessary. When experiencing chemotherapy, your mind doesn't function, as you normally would expect it to. When you are looking for a quick solution to a symptom or side effect, it is much easier to go to an index that is accurate, understandable and within reach.

- ▶ Two of the authors of this book, Nancy Emerson and Susan Moonan, who both lived with cancer for decades, died before it was completed. Can you describe their contributions, and has the book changed in its significance to you in their absence?

**PL:** Their contributions are immeasurable. Without them and their input there would be no book. It has become even more valuable to me because of the legacy that it leaves for those two incredible women. I wish everyone could have known them. They continue to inspire my life every day, and the love that they gave remains always.

**TS:** Their contributions were paramount because of their survival experiences; without them there would be no *Finding the “CAN” in Cancer*. They live on throughout the pages, and the significance of the book will be determined by anyone who is touched by Nancy and Susan's powerful inspiration.

- ▶ As authors, what are your goals for *Finding the “CAN” in Cancer*?

**PL:** We would like it to reach everyone who can be helped by it in any way, and we would like to make it available to people even if they cannot afford it themselves. If it were possible we would go to each person individually to give them help that they need in dealing with cancer, but since that is not possible, we would like this book to be our words of help, comfort, and love to them.

**TS:** My goal is to get our book distributed to as many cancer patients as possible and to reach out to people with the prevailing message of hope. I am personally in the process of establishing a non-profit foundation formed exclusively to raise money for the purchase and distribution of the book. Our hope is that anyone who could benefit, whether they can afford to buy a copy or not, will have access to *Finding the “CAN” in Cancer*.

## Selected Excerpts

## *Finding the "CAN" in Cancer*

Nancy – Page 7

... I should have followed that still small voice within which kept saying to me, "Nancy, you should get another opinion." I wish I had followed that inner guidance, but instead I rationalized that surely if my doctor thought there were a problem he would have sent me to someone to get another opinion. I went merrily on my way in denial because I didn't notice any change for over two years. I had taken a new job which was very stressful and required lots of travel, so I put my health on the back burner.

Nancy – Page 9

Statistics for my survival were 2 years. That was 17 years ago! I felt that my life and the cancer were out of control. Hearing the cancer had recurred was more difficult for me than hearing the original diagnosis. I sat down on my sofa and said, "God, I am out of control! Please give me something to help me get through this." I opened the Bible, and these words were staring back at me: "My peace I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, and neither let it be afraid." Wow! That's the message I needed to calm my fears and give me the peace I needed to face the new challenge. When I closed my eyes to say thanks, I received another wonderful message. I saw in my mind's eye a huge billboard with giant black letters that spelled the word "cancer." As I was wondering what kind of message this was, my eyes just focused on the first three letters of that big black word...CAN! Yes, the first three letters of the word 'CANcer' spell CAN! I had been fighting cancer for three years and had seen that word many times, but I had never seen the CAN in CANcer. I have shared that story with many people and have yet to meet the first one who has seen the CAN. It was a message to me... "You CAN survive!"... "You CAN help others"... "You CAN make a difference."

Pam – Page 17

It was during this time that I began to try to deal with all of the symptoms which accompany cancer and which can make day-to-day life such a challenge. I observed that many times it is the so-called "little" problems that can cause the most difficulties in everyday life (this is true emotionally as well as physically). I tried to become a problem solver for lots of these troubling side effects of disease and treatment and was delighted to be able to help in some small ways to make life more comfortable...

Pam – Page 20

Immediately following the final days of my mother-in-law's difficult and courageous struggle with her cancer, I was diagnosed with endometrial cancer-in-situ, which is the earliest stage of the disease. As I told my three friends, "Some people will do anything to belong to a group!"

Susan – Page 25

There was no consensus as to what type of cancer I had and how to treat it. I had always thought of medicine as being black and white, very definitive. I was learning that is not always the case, and it was a hard lesson. I found myself worrying about all the things that might happen and where it might spread.

Susan – Page 27

The surgeon who proposed this course of action is a special physician with whom I am still in touch. I remember saying to him, – "Can I live like that?" and he remarked, "Think about that question, 'if you can live like that.' Having you live is what it is all about." With his encouragement, we went to another cancer center for a consultation.

Terri – Page 39

My life had taken a new and unusual turn into the world of medicine; this was not a career that I had chosen - it had been assigned to me! Thus began my education about cancer and living through an ordeal that was, at the time, beyond comprehension

( more )

**Terri – Page 41**

I’m trying to convey the important message of choosing life! Do whatever it takes to make that happen. If you believe that you could never survive 10, 15 or 20 years with cancer, then you likely won’t. Realize that everyone experiences personal trauma at some point in life; how you chose to cope with it will be your life-changing moment.

**Fear – Page 48**

The fear that diagnosis elicits is, in large part, fear of the unknown. Some of the questions you may have are: What is going to happen? How sick will I be? Will I need surgery? Will I lose my hair? Will I die from this? You may feel as if these questions are washing over you like waves. Try to connect with those beliefs, people, routines, or any other things that help you to establish a sense of peace. Learning more about your illness and available treatments can be helpful in relieving some fears, but it is not necessary for you to learn as much as the professionals.

**What now? - Page 55**

Try not to add to your stress by thinking you absolutely have to understand your diagnosis, the terminology being used or the treatment options being proposed. This experience will be an ongoing education for you and your family. Allow yourself some time to absorb the news. Your physician or a staff member should be available to review all information and answer your questions over the course of the next few days, weeks, or months. Being a cancer patient is one of life’s greatest challenges. As simplistic as it sounds, try to take it one step at a time. Sometimes the anticipation of what a procedure or treatment will be like is worse than the reality. Once you have seen your doctors, obtained a second or third opinion and completed your research, you may feel overwhelmed with the decisions you have to make. (see also CHAPTER THREE – Second Opinions.) This is one of the most challenging parts of dealing with cancer. Prepared with your information, go into a quiet room alone, turn off the phone, relax and let your intuition be your guide; listen to your inner voice. If you are unsure about what you need to do, take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle, with positives on one side and negatives on the other. All cancer treatments are a balance between risks and side effects. Writing it on paper will enable you to see more clearly what your options are. If you still need additional information, you may want to talk to your doctor. When you have made the decision, don’t look back and say, “I wish I had done...” You made the best choice you could based on the information you had at the time. Don’t try to second-guess yourself or let others cause you to doubt your decisions. Move ahead with confidence.

**Being a Cancer Patient – Page 63**

The amount of information you may want about your illness and treatment may vary. Some patients prefer to be very well- informed, while others want to play a less active role in the decision-making. Neither way is right or wrong; the important thing is to do what is best for you. Initially, the doctor may explain some basic facts about the type of cancer you have and discuss additional diagnostic tests and options for courses of treatment. It is important that you understand the implications of your particular medical situation and the goal of the treatment plan your medical team is suggesting. Focusing on the facts can be challenging at this particular time. Try to understand what you are being told, and realize that it may be difficult to stay focused.

**Second Opinions – Page 66**

It is important to obtain good medical advice and get a second and possibly a third opinion, preferably from a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated comprehensive cancer center. Don’t let anyone rush you into making a decision. Some patients don’t seek a second opinion because it is too inconvenient or they are afraid they will insult the first doctor with whom they consulted. Remember that you don’t get a second chance to do it right, so you want to make sure that you have made the best decision before you move forward with treatment, surgery or radiation.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation – Page 191**

This is a technique used to relax your entire body systematically by alternately tensing and relaxing individual parts of it. By tensing muscles first and then relaxing them, you become aware of how a truly relaxed muscle feels. (Sometimes you are actually tense when you think that you have relaxed, and this helps to show the difference.) Muscle relaxation can be used to help control pain and to relieve anxiety or to help achieve a calm state for meditation.

**Work and Play – Page 204**

Is your job just a job or do you truly enjoy your chosen career? Are you fulfilled at the end of the day? Being unhappy in your work and the resulting stress it brings can rob you of your health. Your daily workplace is a vital aspect of your mental well-being. Even if you are fortunate enough to have a job you enjoy, you may not know how to relax completely at the end of the day. Are you subjecting yourself unnecessarily to the “dis-ease” of workaholism? It is essential that you regularly engage in the counterbalance to work – play. Many of us have associated playing with childhood; yet play is a crucial aspect of mental health and is unequaled in helping us express joy, passion, and exhilaration. The meaning of the word play is to dance, leap for joy, and rejoice - all activities that suggest a healthy mental state. Play has been described as any activity in which you lose track of time.

**Living with Cancer as a Chronic Disease – Page 218**

For some patients the cancer road is much longer; it continues from recurrence to recurrence. Countless people are surviving and living with cancer as a chronic disease for many years. Your life has changed dramatically, but you can expect this change to become easier with each passing day. Your focus will shift from keeping the disease under control to maintaining a satisfying lifestyle. You will always be in search of that perfect drug that will cure you, and every day will be a challenge. There will be days that you want to quit, but you can't stop living. You know that no one is going to live forever, but you also know that your chances of living as long as other people are limited. You have an opportunity to look at life differently now. It is now that you start living your real life – thanking God for this new awareness - seeing things as you have never seen them before: watching God's pallet as he paints the sunset, the brilliance of stars in the night sky, seeing the many colors of spring in bloom, hearing a bluebird singing just for you, and looking at your children and grandchildren in precious new ways. Your priorities, your perspectives, everything will change. You have heightened awareness of everything. You learn to let go of your limitations and inhibitions; there's a new freedom to living, and a freedom from other people's expectations. You realize that what someone thinks of you can't give one you extra day of living. There's no amount of money that can buy you a longer life.

**What advance readers are saying:**

***Finding the “CAN” in Cancer***

“Informational and full of insight for patients, family caregivers and professionals. By weaving personal experiences throughout the book, readers are inspired by how these women persevered through the challenges of cancer on both a physical and spiritual level.”

-Rita Deimler, RN, BSN, OCN

This book is many things: a pragmatic and practical handbook on dealing with the details of cancer treatment, a book with helpful and inspirational vignettes, and most of all, a story of friends. I have had the honor and privilege of knowing each of them, and participating in some of their battles. Each exemplifies a depth of resourcefulness and optimism that has sustained them through the roughest of times. They have come together to write this book as a guide to “Finding the CAN in Cancer.” It contains valuable advice garnered from years of experience facing this disease. Through this book, they have extended their love and friendship to others now facing this challenge. I know that those who read this book will find that love and friendship, and will be encouraged to thrive as they handle their own cancer ordeal.

-P. Kelly Marcom, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine  
Director, Breast Medical Oncology and Hereditary Cancer Clinic  
Duke University Multidisciplinary Breast Program

“Instead of an intangible message of hope, this book gives a touchable, real, comforting hope that you can physically and mentally apply to patients when they need it most. I applaud your obvious love for all people and for cancer patients in particular. You have given patients and those who love and care for them a light in the darkness.”

-Rita Freshwater, Caregiver

“I read your book into the night...it is absolutely the answer for people who have cancer, not omitting anything. The words and organization are sensitive, well-written, very informative, and medically comprehensive.”

-Ann Turlington

“Your book was heart warming but was also full of useful information. I have passed it on to our Cancer Educator as it would be a great addition to the educational material that we provide to our new cancer patients.”

-Joe Davis, Survivor  
Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon, VA

“I was struck not only by how clear and well organized, and helpful the information is, but also how approachable your style is as authors. You offered equal doses of realism, hope and practical suggestions in a manner that felt like you were sitting right beside the reader. As a former caregiver of a loved one with cancer, I often wished for a practical guide from someone who ‘had been there, done that.’ Your book is it!”

-Missy Lohr, Caregiver

“...It’s a gem. Many of the usual topics are covered – communicating with your doctor(s), telling the kids coping with side effects, helping others to help you – but in an unusually candid way... The level of detail on side effects is rich and personal... The effect is quite intimate, as if you were sharing the living room with four good-humored, wise and earnest life-coaches... You may have encountered similar sentiments in other books on cancer journeys but seldom will they hit home so convincingly as in this ‘practical guide.’”

-Harriet Whitehead, PhD  
Duke University Resource Center Coordinator

**What advance readers are saying, page 2:**

***Finding the “CAN” in Cancer***

“This is the kind of book that wraps up everything you’ve ever heard in every book, pamphlet, and true story all together. “Finding the “CAN” in Cancer” is a reliable, invigorating soft cover for the layman to easily comprehend. It’s like a bible of definitions, direction, options and hope for patients, survivors, and their families alike... This is good news for anyone just learning about or in the middle of their cancer battle. These ladies have

made survival look like a plan, not just a possibility... There are pages of resources for products, books, and websites... Hats off to these ladies for gracefully carrying out a much-needed message of survival.”

- Kim Koppman  
Algiers Point Association Newspaper

Would that I had had *Finding the “CAN” in Cancer* from the moment I learned of my own diagnosis! For after the tears come fear and uncertainty, and the trip down new and often dark paths in search of recovery. For both patients and their caregivers, this book offers useful information and realistic suggestions for dealing with cancer treatment. And as important as the information and suggestions are, the personal stories of the authors provide a spiritual aspect of the cancer experience so vital to healing and recovery. *Finding the “CAN” in Cancer* ought to be made part and parcel of the armory of weapons for every patient and caregiver in the search for effective treatment and, one hopes, a cure for cancer that is a universal goal.

-Paula A. Callery, Survivor  
Callery’s Counsel—Counsel for Nonprofit Fund Raising and Communications