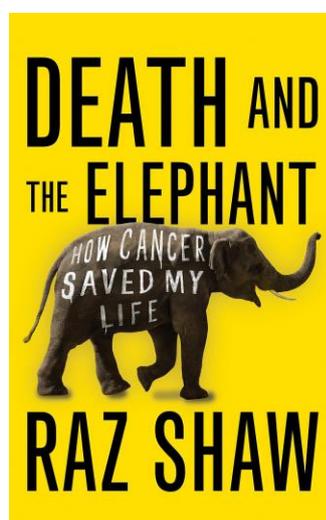


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Death and the elephant. How cancer saved my life (2018)**

Shaw, R.

Unbound, 2018.

304pp.

ISBN 9781783524778.

**Average star rating 3.7 (out of 5)**

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Anyone affected by cancer could read this book, as could family and friends. The author doesn't hold back, and this is a brutally honest account. He writes in such a fashion that nothing is spared, from diagnosis through to end of treatment. It is an honest account of not only his feelings but also of others' reactions to his illness, how he coped not just with cancer and treatment but also recovery and his addiction. It is heart wrenching at times, but his humour, intelligence and wit shine through.

The book flows well and I love the tone. I could imagine perfectly the scenes he describes. His choice of language and words was necessary for him; it is his journey. The hardback is bright yellow with the words 'How cancer saved my life' on the elephant; straight to the point and perfect for this book.

I had little prior knowledge of this cancer, so found it a useful read. Raz's honesty, about himself and everyone around him, gave me a true account of how other people reacted to his illness. I felt his journey from beginning to end; his despair, courage and humour were immense at times. I could hear him talking as I was reading, I totally understood his views, his pain, his humour and wit. His language and honesty make his book a realistic account of a cancer journey. He certainly doesn't hold back.

I now have better understanding of this cancer and its effects on the patient. Not only the patient but also how others relate to them. Raz opens his heart and dissects every aspect of his life. His honest account and stories are brilliant, whether you laugh or cry, it is his brilliant mind and use of language that tell the story. My eyes have been opened, and for that I thank him.

**Friend/relative of cancer patients (36-45) (September 2018)**

I loved this book; so much so, that I was sorry when it ended. Anyone who enjoys black humour and who is trying to find their way through cancer, as a patient, or supporting a patient, will find it an interesting read. It's all about (horrible phrase), 'The journey', but it's a fascinating and refreshing new take on being diagnosed. It is particularly useful for trying to process what diagnosis means, especially for young patients – Raz was 28 when diagnosed. I also found it fascinating to read the reality of being a gambling addict in the middle of dealing with Stage 4 sclerosing mediastinal non-Hodgkin lymphoma of the large cell type.

The cover is nice and bright cover and the layout is good. It is very easy to understand, and the slightly ironic tone makes a pleasant change. It's not a 'worthy' or 'brave' book (although I think Raz is immensely brave). It's a book with a lot of swearing and harsh truths, which will appeal to people who want to know about the realities of cancer but who also want to be entertained; it's very interesting and funny.

I like the humour and the fact that its truthful, sometimes right-down-to-the-bare-bones truthful. I really felt for Raz and you're willing him along all the way through the book. I enjoyed the originality of the book: for example, there's a little line of music, so you can sing the word 'Cancer' to the tune of 'Amazing Grace'. Then another chapter has the word 'CANCER' written in different ways. It's witty and original.

I think this book will particularly appeal to people with a dark sense of humour, who are either adept at looking for the positive in situations; or who are trying to find the positive. It may possibly appeal more to men; from my experience reviewing cancer books, there aren't many books that have this 'blokey' style – I found it very original. Having said that, I really enjoyed this book, despite not being male! I don't think it matters what type of cancer you have (or even if you have cancer at all) because this book is very accessible.

I love this book. It is a pleasure to read. It's not a worthy 'look at me being brave' book, despite Raz being extremely strong and, although I hate this word, brave. If you like programmes like 'The last leg', this is the book for you. It's irreverent, makes fun of the side-effects of cancer, such as losing your hair – Raz believes he '... ended up looking like a big, old, puffy-eyed, huge headed, no-arsed, smooth-skinned newborn' – and the myriad feelings you can go through as a patient, from being terrified, to the fear of how you'll cope once you're in remission. But it also speaks of the surprising positives that cancer can bring, giving you confidence to take more risks. As Raz says, 'A lot of the time it was specially f\*cking awful...but (he) used this opportunity to do things and try things that (he) never imagined (he) would do.'

You need to ensure that the person you're giving this book to has a very good, rather black sense of humour and who able to find the humour in situations. Anyone with this style of humour will love it! I highly recommend it (but only if you're ok with swearing, discussions of having sex when on chemo, and graphic descriptions of eating salt and vinegar crisps with hundreds of mouth ulcers...).

### **Burkitt lymphoma survivor (46-55) (August 2018)**

This is a highly entertaining book that would be a good general read for anyone with or without a cancer journey to empathise with the emotions portrayed. Anyone with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, or indeed any cancer, who is going through, has been through, or will need chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy will benefit from such an honest and open account. It gives coping strategies and hope.

With the benefit of 20-year's hindsight, Raz logically maps out the book from diagnosis to life post cancer. It flows well and is very easy to follow. The language, which is extremely easy to understand, isn't technical in the slightest. Whether all audiences will find it appropriate I don't know, as it is casually flamboyant with many

expletives, but I love the tone and couldn't wait to read the next chapter. To start with I found his punctuation confusing and strange, but the style mirrors his quirkiness. There is a bit of repetition but understandably so. The look of the book mirrors the style of the book. It doesn't need photos as the narrative brings the journey to life.

I liked understanding what goes on in the head of someone coping with such a journey. It gives insight and hope to many people who will be going through treatment, and those trying to support them. I found it a lesson in how to cope with the news of a loved one being diagnosed with cancer, and what they need to help them deal with their situation. I very much liked Raz's humour, his honesty and how he was able to show strength when he had none. I found it inspirational and comforting. In a market that has many cancer books, it was also interesting to read about his gambling addiction and how this interacted with his cancer journey. After finishing, I felt uplifted and educated.

Raz is such an open and likeable character that you can't help but go on his journey with him. By writing in retrospect he has the luxury of being able to add perhaps more humour than he may have done at the time, although he has preserved the devastating emotion that goes with it. It's a book that I would read again, and certainly recommend and buy for friends. I have already purchased it for a friend who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

### **Friend and relative to cancer patients and survivors (56-65) (June 2018)**

Raz uses humour in a naturally positive way and this makes his book very easy to read. Humour aside, it is a serious story of survival, with a far from fairy tale treatment plan and many setbacks. Anyone who knows or works with cancer patients will benefit from understanding the patient perspective. There are also some very good underlying tips on how to be a good friend to someone with cancer, knowing when to engage and when to let be; as Raz knows, it is possible to kill with kindness.

The language is plain English and subjects like sperm donation are never skirted around. The observational details are abundant as physical and emotional experiences are vividly communicated. The book takes us through a no-holds-barred account of cancer, from rapid diagnosis to intensive treatment. Every step is covered in a humorous and open way; I found the style very appealing.

I would give this book to anyone and believe it would make them feel better. The simple questioning of the value of "why me" talk is relevant to us all. The key theme through diagnosis and starting chemo is lack of control; the portrayal of this is helpful and would be useful reflection for anyone with cancer or supporting those with cancer. The small dignity of sleeping naked in a hospital bed is a strong message about giving patients their normal?

There are elements of panic and moments of control – I like that. There is always reflection and Raz is good at getting what he wants, in this way, other cancer patients might find the tale overwhelming. But it is important because Raz explains what it feels like to be a medical phenomenon, an interesting side effect, and ignored as a person. He reminds anyone who knows or works with patients to respect their dignity.

I found it fascinating how Raz weaves his experiences through the context of his past and his interpretation of cancer and its effect on his life. This is a bold attempt to rationalise shock, which anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis will relate to. However, although the analogy of cancer treatment as a game of space invaders, is clever and just (it is a personal account and I found it hilarious), some readers might feel it is trivialising an upsetting experience to get a laugh.

From every aspect, the author is an optimist and a realist. Having resolved to keep putting things into perspective, with “why not me?”, he tackles the issues of a young man with cancer and thoughts of sex. This is a good account of coming to terms with the changes that cancer brings to normal life and accepting that the things that used to make you happy might no longer be possible.

First and foremost, this is an excellently entertaining autobiography that I will be recommending to everyone! What more hopeful theme could there be than that cancer would make your life better? Right from the start, this down-to-earth, brash, and funny book, made me want to read more. Raz advises us to, “get lost in the discoveries, rather than think about the illness” – good advice for everyone!

### **Treated for breast cancer in 2005 (46-55) (June 2018)**

*Death and the elephant* is 50-something Raz Shaw’s candid, sometimes brutal, but articulate account of his physical and psychological journey through cancer and survival at the age of 28. The book is probably best suited to readers going through a similar experience and/or someone in a related caring capacity. On the other hand, it is also full of inspiring anecdotes that refer to the broader picture that is life, so I would suggest that anyone could learn something from this book.

The book covers almost all aspects of having non-Hodgkin lymphoma. In “Chemo days”, where Shaw describes it as “the bizarre, light-headed, sick-in-your-mouth feeling”, only the reader who is, or has been, going through the same thing would understand the sometimes traumatic and often unprecedented side effects of such invasive treatment, “Like you’re crawling through the Sahara on your hands and knees with no water and nobody around except a tiny screen showing you how charmed everybody else’s life appears to be”. Shaw also writes heavily about the psychological ramifications of having cancer, and the sometimes-surprising shifts in other people’s attitudes towards sickness and death when it’s happening to ‘one of their own’. He writes about his shock at the feelings of grief he experiences after going into full remission, “I am in mourning for my ill self”, and how his new-found recovery sends him hurtling back at breaking speed to the local casino to reconnect with his lifelong gambling addiction. The reason being, he says, is because his “ill self” is no longer protecting him from acting out with this other illness that he’s been battling since placing his first bet at a dog race at the age of eleven.

The story reads with fluidity, in three sections – the before, during, and after if you like. The correlation between Shaw’s chronic gambling and the cancer that eventually, and ironically, saves him from his addiction, weaves in and out of the book in a fairly chronological fashion too. Shaw’s literary tone swings between the utmost creative – almost poetic – intensity and borderline crude humour. He refers to

the one side effect of chemo that he found most difficult to handle as “The No Arse” – “the one part of my anatomy that is fail f\*cking safe, had gone”. Plus, it is difficult not to chuckle at his pretending to be asleep to cope with a nurse’s inane incessant gossiping whilst injecting him with alkaloid drugs. Or to recoil in horror at his description of his mouth littered with 350 ulcers in one go (“Oral Armageddon”)!

I reviewed the hardback. The jacket brightly depicts an illustration of an elephant with the words “HOW CANCER SAVED MY LIFE” across its torso. There are no photos inside, but such is the creative and emotive nature in Shaw’s writing (he is a theatre director by trade) that further illustrative material would be surplus to requirements.

I like how Shaw’s story recounts his illness in the broader context of his life as an addict, and, well, as a human being wading through life’s treacle in the same way we all do sometimes. His career in the theatre is shown by the way he constantly personifies cancer as his “pesky little brother”, like a character on the stage that’s been given the lead role. And the switching between the past and present tense only adds a sense of immediacy and power to the writing. Rarely does a book cause me to well up, except in “Emotional roulette”. Ignoring all medical advice, Shaw discharges himself from hospital to race up the motorway to see his best friend get married, and to try get a taste “from the euphoric glass of normality”, albeit temporarily. Early next morning he finds himself back in the hospital ward, feeling bereft and tearfully overwhelmed. This juxtaposition of emotions and their opposites is a staple of Shaw’s writing here, and it’s cleverly executed. You almost feel like you are surfing every cognitive and emotional wave with him.

Whilst I applaud Shaw’s candour and the black humour that overshadows a lot of his anecdotes, the book can at times come across as a little too self-indulgent. Perhaps this is a controversial thing to say about an author writing about cancer – why shouldn’t he take up an entire chapter to describe one emotion? Some readers may well find some of the writing a little too intense. Also, the book ends with a couple of plays that Shaw has been involved in, but they don’t seem that relevant to the rest of the book. It is almost as if the story is being drawn out after the final chapter.

Shaw’s autobiography is littered with emotional and psychological support that he offers to the reader using his experiences. I would absolutely recommend it to any reader with an open mind; a strong understanding of irony, and a slightly warped sense of humour. *Death and the elephant* manages to locate and embrace the funny in the tragic, and I think that there are few readers who would fail to draw some inspiration and encouragement from it. Anyone looking for support of a more practical factual nature may find this book less useful.

**Former carer to terminally ill mother with Grade IV Glioblastoma, March 2006 (36-45) (May 2018)**



I enjoyed reading this book as I gained an insight into how the author related to a different type of cancer and living with a gambling addiction. The way he describes his deep emotions about diagnosis is excellent, how he hit rock bottom and slowly over time came to rise above his previous negativity and change his life. Other cancer patients could relate to this very well, gain other types of wisdom and see life from a different perspective.

It is well written and addresses all aspects of non-Hodgkin lymphoma: diagnosis; treatment; difficulties faced physically; and the outcome. The book also deals with the emotions caused by gambling and cancer simultaneously. The support from family and friends is described in good detail.

It is easy to understand but the emotional problems are very deep when the author refers to his addiction and living with cancer. The language is appropriate for the subject. I found it difficult to follow in places as the author changed subjects quickly, but I read it twice and could better comprehend the overall feel of the book. I like the cover and the book is well set out with respect to typeface and chaptering.

I recommend this book. It could be useful for anyone with cancer as shows the very positive life-changing aspects that can happen, even where addiction has hampered progress. It is appropriate for anyone living with cancer or caring for them. It describes feelings and medical processes well, with a positive attitude and an open and honest tone as the author faces up to difficulties with his cancer and addiction. I thoroughly enjoyed it after the second reading – it made much more sense. I found it quite sad to read in places where the author was trying to overcome his emotions.

### **Previous breast cancer patient (56-65) (December 2018)**

This is a personal experience of living through cancer and addiction, which may make it useful for anyone. There isn't much information about non-Hodgkin lymphoma or its treatment, so if you are looking for facts, it isn't the book for you. However, the fact that Raz survived a stage 4 diagnosis can give hope and a positive message to anyone else in this circumstance.

The cover and title captured my attention and made me want to read it, despite it not being related to my cancer. It does jump around a little, but that doesn't make it difficult to follow as the jumps are explained and do fit the 'mental' and 'psychological' story line. There aren't many technical terms so there isn't much need for a glossary. There is too much text in an italic typeface and I found this difficult to read at times.

Even though Raz had a different cancer from me and lives in a different world, his honesty and experience resonated on many occasions, e.g. one of the jobs of someone with cancer is to make others feel comfortable with it and to continue to see you as the person rather than the disease. The internal conversations and arguments also made me smile; I was thinking, yep I did that!

People need to be aware that there is a significant amount of swearing. Most of the time it is funny, real, and appropriate; it's what Raz was thinking. However, the language is sometimes overdone, and one very offensive word could have been \*\*ed out while still leaving the impression. If you are easily offended, it isn't for you.

It is interesting rather than useful, but I enjoyed reading it and the short chapters made me feel I was progressing nicely. It isn't NHL-specific, more how to get through life. Raz has an unusually interesting story to tell and is very honest about his life, and the ups and downs; his story and outcome could really give people hope for a better future. The only reason I didn't give it five stars is the excessive foul language.

### **Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (July 2018)**

This book will be useful for anyone having chemotherapy for any cancer, particularly the under 30s. The most useful aspects are the effects of chemotherapy, the involvement of hospitals and the staff, and having a positive outlook. It looks appealing. It is easy to understand if you have some knowledge of cancer. The author explains cancer at the start in easy lay terms.

I like that the author is positive and upbeat about his cancer and makes light of what must have been an awful time, but I found it quite disjointed; it isn't difficult to follow but doesn't flow right. The appendices are unnecessary, and I don't understand what the list of supporters is all about? I don't like the frequent swearing, it is unnecessary. The tone is mainly positive, which I found beneficial, and I like the fact that he maintained a life as well as kept fit during his cancer treatment.

I got quite engrossed in this book at the beginning and in the middle but had to make myself read the last quarter. There are some interesting parts, some funny and some sad. I just wonder why he wrote it 20 years after his diagnosis? A lot has improved in treatment since then. He spent a lot of his treatment time in hospital, which I don't feel would necessarily happen now.

### **Carer of husband with advanced bladder cancer (66-75) (June 2018)**



Although the author had non-Hodgkin lymphoma, most of the book is about his feelings and experiences of treatment and hospitals, which applies to anyone with cancer. He is cured, so it is a good, positive book for someone diagnosed with this cancer, particularly the challenges he has as a young, single man. It flows well and the language is easy to read; there are few medical terms, so no glossary is required. The cover is eye catching and chapter length is good.

I like the author's honesty and humour. Anyone could read this book; they will get a sense of the feelings that a cancer patient may not be expressing.

### **Living with incurable brain tumour for 14 years (36-45) (November 2019)**

Whilst this book could be useful for patients, carers, or health professionals, it is most useful to the public and family and friends of someone with cancer. The author rarely touches on the specifics of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, apart from brief explanations of his coping mechanisms and treatment side effects. It provides some interesting insight into what he found comforting when having treatment in hospital, specifically the sort of visits and behaviour that restored a sense of normality.

Its value is in explaining the benefits of a positive mental attitude rather than details of treatment. By talking about his struggles with gambling, the author also sheds light on how remaining busy and keeping a sense of normality can be highly beneficial (albeit done in a healthier way!). The sections around embracing hair loss and the support of friends at difficult times could also be comforting for some readers.

The book looks good and is of a high quality. The inclusion of pictures would have added a bit more context, but this doesn't detract from the quality of writing. It follows a chronological order, including an initial backstory about the author's gambling – a key subject throughout. It is easy to understand with medical terminology kept to a minimum. In terms of the intended audience, this book isn't recommended for finding out more about specifics on non-Hodgkin lymphoma. It is however an interesting account of the author's gambling struggles and how they somewhat served a purpose when dealing with his cancer diagnosis, providing an escape back to his 'normal' life. The book is written in a very informal, conversational tone that makes it simple to read whilst adding to the author's authenticity. This tone allows the content to be very open and honest although at times it can seem slightly harder to follow.

I like that the book has two dimensions: the author's gambling addiction and his experience with cancer. The unique nature of these issues being covered in the same book means that it is very different to other autobiographical accounts of cancer I have reviewed for Macmillan. As someone whose experience of cancer is as a relative, I think it gives some great insights into the day-to-day emotions that only someone who has been through treatment can really explain.

At times, the informal nature of the book meant that it felt hard to stay engaged. The author can also be quite self-deprecating about his appearance during treatment. Whilst this is certainly intended humorously it may not be interpreted that way by someone going through a similar experience.

### **Son of lung cancer patient (26-35) (July 2018)**

The author covers his every emotion and thought at various stages of his cancer and how he battled with how he was feeling against how he believed he should feel. Those with, or caring for someone with, non-Hodgkin lymphoma may relate to most, if not all, of the feelings described; it may help them better understand the process.

The book is quite attractive, in a bright yellow cover with a black title that explains that it is about cancer whilst leaving you intrigued at the same time. The typeface is easy to read, and the contents are set out well and in a logical order. However, the author has a chaotic style of writing – possibly due to writing how he was feeling at the time – which does make the story a little difficult to follow.

There are very few technical references and the book is more about the author's feelings as he goes through the process, and less about treatment. He writes from the perspective of his 28-year-old self and uses profanities that some readers may find difficult; although not every other page, they pepper the book, making the read a little uncomfortable for me. His sometimes-sarcastic humour may also not be to everyone's taste. He seems to write as he was thinking at the time and his thought processes may not always make sense to the reader, although true to him.

The author is very honest about his battle with two demons – namely cancer and a gambling addiction – and it doesn't feel as if he held anything back, making this a very honest account of his life through that period.

It could be useful to carers and patients to provide an understand that others going through this process feel the same emotions and feelings. The witty and chaotic style of writing can be difficult to follow if the mind isn't entirely clear and if the reader isn't in a light mood; however, in the right mood it can seem just what it is: witty, blunt and candid with many references to thoughts and feelings of the author as he journeys through diagnosis, treatment and his unexpected emotions on being discharged.

### **Carer for close family members with various cancers (46-55) (June 2018)**

Raz Shaw, an award-winning theatre director, wrote this book in his fifties, although his nine-month experience of cancer took place when he was 28. The book tracks his life from diagnosis to the end of treatment and beyond and describes his addiction to gambling that runs alongside his cancer. He accepts his treatment – except when he absconds from hospital to attend a wedding – and appears to be able to keep up his social life. He does not give advice nor explain his treatment in detail. However, he is exceptionally clever with words, and skilled in distilling his thoughts into poetry and interesting prose, most of which is placed in italics throughout (this does make it hard to read). He considers death in some depth, and his fears about his possible demise.

Raz has a clever and sometimes witty, sometimes poetic style. He uses words well to explore his experiences and feelings. He writes a lot about sex and its importance, but less of friendship and personal attachment. Cancer gives him status; this makes people feel sorry for him and women want to have sex with him. He uses explicit language to describe his sex life and for emphasis in other contexts. I find this appropriate in his situation, but some may find it objectionable. What I do find unpleasant is that he used his cancer status (his words) to get sex, which he refers to as a distinct activity, as if friendship, communicating, even love, are not a part of all this. Call me old-fashioned, but I find this unattractive.

I was looking forward to gaining insight into gambling. Many addictions (eating, drugs, alcohol) I can understand, but I have never 'got' gambling. This book gave no insight into this addiction. Raz says he went to a casino every day from when it opened until it shut, for a long time, but he did not convincingly describe the thrill that must happen when winning. However, I did enjoy his account of the epiphany he had in the betting shop that triggered his successful recovery from the addiction.

This book is all about the author. I do not think that someone with a similar condition would gain knowledge – nor inspiration and hope – from reading it. It does not aim to be useful in the understanding of this condition in the medical sense. It is an autobiographical account of the time when the author had a diagnosis of – and treatment for – cancer, which coincided with a gambling addiction. He does not use his experiences to provide information that would be helpful to others.

In conclusion, this is an interesting book, if a little self-centred; the author's writing style is – for me – a clever and witty account of his life at a very challenging time. He has a great gift of using words in a dramatic and thought-provoking way.

### **Former health professional (head and neck cancer) (56-65) (May 2018)**

I didn't particularly enjoy this book. I didn't dislike it but found the style difficult to follow for some reason and I could not focus particularly well. I ended up skim reading bits and probably missed much of the 'point' of the narrative and story. However, the parallel between a gambling addiction and cancer is interesting and unique and I wonder if this can be said of other addictions. (I am wondering on a personal level here as I have an eating disorder that has become rife since I was diagnosed). One last note; 350 mouth ulcers at one time! Ouch!!

### **Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) (46-55) (April 2018)**



This is one man's story. It may interest some readers, but I do not think it is a useful read unless you acknowledge that everyone's cancer journey is unique and are interested in reading someone else's experience.

If I were to recommend one part of this book, it would be the chapter "Ration the relatives", where the author gives his views on hospital visitors and how he dealt with them. This is worth reading for patients and visitors. The rest of the book is largely his personal story, and even if you have a cancer experience intertwined with a gambling addiction (the thread throughout the book), it is not particularly useful.

The text is easy to understand, with few technical words but the overall presentation irritated me; the book is over-reliant on block capitals and bold text. If the author really wants to make a point, then why not combine both and throw in a change in font size. I found this emphasis almost childish; if the quality of the writing is good enough, then the book would not need to rely on this.

I like "Emotional roulette" and "Ration the relatives". In the first, the author describes how he ignored advice and broke the curfew for returning to hospital after a wedding. The description of support from a nurse and a next-day visit from hungover friends was a highlight; it reminded me that we all have to rebel occasionally and feed our emotional as well as medical needs. The second reminded me that everyone needs to put the patient and their needs at the centre of all decisions.

Although it is worthwhile reading someone else's story, I did not take much away from this book. It is clearly one man's story, but it did feel quite forced – trying to be funny, trying to shock, trying to draw on the reader's emotions. The presentation is further evidence of it being forced.

I could summarise the book:

Young man has gambling addiction

Young man gets CANCER

Young man is treated for this

Young man has a few experiences whilst being treated

Young man informed that he is in remission

Young man begins three “self-destruction blow out weeks” of gambling

Young man reminded of “a world I never want to return to”

Young man stops gambling

Young man's story written by his older self

I did look at reviews on Amazon and was quite surprised that they were all five-star. I have missed something, or it is not aimed at me. But it is worth noting that some Amazon reviewers' names tally with “supporters” who crowd-funded the book. It is of general interest if you want to read someone else's story, but borrow it from a library, don't money on it. If you want to learn about non-Hodgkin lymphoma, look elsewhere.

### **Ex Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma patient (46-55) (October 2018)**

Overall, I was not impressed with the book. If I had paid for it, I would have been very disappointed. I like Raz's honesty but feel that the book focuses more on his gambling addiction.

I like the front cover and the paper is nice to handle. The content flows in a logical order – diagnosis, treatment, results – and it is easy to understand, I did not find it technical or difficult. However, I dislike the constant repetition of words and letters. This appears to be a running theme but is a waste of words, letters and space and adds nothing; it feels more of a hindrance and interferes with the flow.

I would not recommend it to someone newly diagnosed but it might be of interest to someone a few years along their journey for a perspective of how someone else with NHL coped. Some parts may resonate with them and with people with other cancers; they may be able to identify with Raz and understand that their feelings are normal.

### **Happy to be living well and with non-Hodgkin lymphoma (56-65) (May 2018)**

## Further information

### Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

### Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

### Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

**Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than your health – it can also affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But you’re still you. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping people through cancer, we get what’s most important: that you’re treated as a person, not just a patient.**

**It’s why we’ll take the time to understand you and all that matters to you, so we can help you get the support you need to take care of your health, protect your personal relationships and deal with money and work worries.**

**We’re here to help you find your best way through from the moment of diagnosis, so you’re able to live life as fully as you can. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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