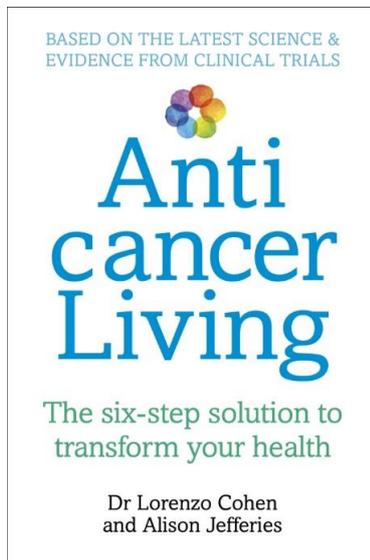


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BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Anti cancer living. The six-step
solution to transform your health
(2018)**

Cohen L, Jefferies A.
London: Vermillion, 2018.
xiii, 416pp.
ISBN 9781785040757.
£14.99.

Average star rating 4.1 (out of 5)

Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7UQ

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This book would be helpful to explain the different potential aspects of nutrition, stress, emotional resilience and exercise for anyone with cancer and how these lifestyle factors may affect you. It is an extremely comprehensive book for anyone with cancer or their carer.

I didn't notice any obvious inaccuracies, but it is difficult to say with certainty. The case studies do not have much background and we cannot know if any medical treatment contributed to survival rates as well as following the book's 'plan'. There are over 914 references to 'support' the plan. Without reading all 914 papers, it is difficult to know how biased/unbiased the information is.

It is technical at times and not a quick read; it requires a moderate amount of concentration to take it all in. However, it is divided into sections, so if, for example, you are interested in stress and its effects, you can go straight to that section.

It is difficult to remember so many points and recommendations; you need to read it two or three times, to understand the background to the plan to follow it effectively. I view it almost as more of a textbook, than an easy-to-follow anti-cancer plan.

Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre Manager (46-55) (January 2019)

This has given me lots of food for thought. Anyone could learn something from it. The section about 'moving for wellness' is particularly useful; patients who exercise during treatment report better self-esteem, less chemobrain, less fatigue, and improved sleep. It then describes how exercise has been shown to lower the rate of recurrence and the risk of death from various cancers. This may inspire patients.

It's quite a thick book but split into sections that you can dip in and out of, which is great. It's very easy to understand and there is a large notes section with references to all the books, reports, and research papers mentioned in the different sections. The cover is appealing. It has a small 'flower' shape made up of six coloured circles (to represent each section I suppose) and is plain white with coloured text that is easy to read. There are no illustrations or photos, but that isn't a problem.

I like the fact that all the statistics referred to are referenced in the back of the book. I like how the authors write, it's very readable. I love the fact that it's in sections, so you can jump to the section that interests you most, rather than having to read the whole book from cover to cover.

It doesn't really provide much in the way of emotional support, but it's very useful as a general interest book. I recommend it; it encourages you to think outside the box.

I had skin cancer (melanoma); my mum had breast cancer (36-45) (October 2018)

This book is amazing. It is intelligently written, and brilliantly descriptive of the causes of cancer, new focal points of treatment, the difference between healing and curing, and a lot, lot more. Before even getting to the importance of the six simple lifestyle choices for improving your health or recovering from treatment, you read a revolutionary understanding of how lifestyle might affect cancer's ability to develop and grow and to take up changes to defy the odds and outlive expectations. It is useful for anyone, with or without cancer.

It is a marvellous read. I could not put it down once I started. The authors use layman's language; it is as if friends are talking together. Everything in the book is appealing, from the cover and design to the tables.

This is a contemporary demystification of cancer in the way one would study if taking a Cancer Awareness Diploma Course. It is what the audience is waiting for – a brilliantly presented documentary on cancer and anti-cancer living.

Breast cancer patient (56-65) (October 2018)

This book will now become an integral part of my recovery. It has been very helpful for me to read about practical, simple ideas that can improve my lifestyle. Following a cancer diagnosis, you can lose your way, but this book sets you clearly back on the road to recovery. I have found it extremely useful three years after diagnosis and think that anyone looking to improve their lifestyle choices will benefit from reading it.

It explores the history of cancer and how it has evolved. It asks, "What if we could make basic, sustainable lifestyle adjustments that might push back the onset of cancer or even prevent us from ever getting it?" It is a book for people who want to change their way of life and are prepared to make small but effective changes to improve their chances of not getting cancer. It describes the "Mix of Six", which are six areas to improve our lives. These include stress and resilience, and food and exercise – all practical, useful and achievable actions.

It is very easy to understand, even though some of the content is quite technical. At the end of each chapter is a summary of the contents and there are comprehensive notes at the back of the book linked to references throughout the book.

I enjoyed this book. There is a lot of information, but it is presented in a clear way so that it is easy to understand. I like the summaries at the end of each chapter and the clear advice delivered in a non-hysterical way. When I finished reading, I had some clear ideas about minor adjustments I could make to improve my life. It is a book that I will continue to refer to as I make changes to my lifestyle and it will become a reference book for the whole family.

A very useful book with advice and actions that are achievable by anyone looking to improve their lifestyle. It is probably most useful after treatment when people are looking forward to improving their lives. A must for everyone's bookshelf.

Breast cancer diagnosed June 2015 and treated with chemotherapy, mastectomy and radiotherapy. Diep flap reconstruction December 2017. Awaiting breast reduction (46-55) (September 2018)

This book provides clear, practical guidelines backed up by solid evidence and case studies, on how to live a healthy lifestyle that will help us avoid cancer or live with it for longer and with a better quality of life. It is giving us hope by showing that we are not helpless and that there are many lifestyle changes that could dramatically change the outcomes in our favour. It has clear, actionable lifestyle changes for people with cancer as well as those who want to avoid getting it. Even minor changes can have a remarkable effect, especially a combination of the six pillars identified by the authors: social support; stress management; sleep; exercise; diet; and environment.

I could not stop reading it; it is engaging and well designed. The paper is good quality and the font size is readable. It is fairly easy to understand; any technical terms are generally explained simply in the text. It is very well structured. The first chapters provide clear explanations of the nature of cancer, its causes, how it spreads. The Mix of Six is then introduced, and each of the pillars has its own section with advice and solid evidence. At the end of each section there are suggested actionable, lifestyle changes, as well as a summary of the most important recommended actions. The book concludes with an inspirational chapter encouraging doctors to make integrative medicine part of the treatment plan and people to change their lifestyles.

The authors, very experienced professionals with impressive credentials, provide invaluable advice for anyone who wishes to reduce their risk of cancer or to live a quality life with it. The core of their theory is the six pillars they have identified for healthy living. They advocate for these changes to be combined as there is a clear synergy between them. Their advice is backed up by solid scientific evidence and plenty of case studies showing people in terminal stages managing to survive for longer than anticipated by their doctors, and with a good quality of life. In addition, it also shows how damaging some modern habits are; it was often a surprise how far reaching their negative consequences could be.

This book is empowering and inspirational; it leads us to make lifestyle changes even if we are healthy and doctors to approach treatment from a different perspective.

Relative and friend of several people with breast, pancreatic, ovarian, liver cancer (26-35) (August 2018)

Anti Cancer Living aims to show a clear link between lifestyle and wellness, backed up by scientific evidence of clinical trials, statistics, references to research and examples of survivors' stories, which bring the science to life. It is intended as a roadmap for the journey ahead where we can work in tandem with science and doctors to support our own health. Anyone, particularly someone who has or has had cancer, or is close to someone with cancer, will find it. It helps encourage a positive outlook and is inspirational in guiding you to aim for purposeful anti-cancer living.

The layout is logical and the tone factual and credible; the use of tables sometimes works, I'm not sure about the graphs. It isn't always easy to understand the medical terms and it sometimes took me a second reading to get it, but it is worthwhile, and the authors explain technical words as they go along. It's a bit heavy and scary in two sections: Appendix A on cancer hallmarks; and Chapter 4 in the description of DNA damage replicating. However, it is turned around to be a positive in that the body can contain cancer without harm and we can help our bodies become more resistant.

The Anti Cancer Revolution chapter is a strong message that we can prevent cancer, increase life expectancy if diagnosed, and dramatically improve our quality of life, by adopting an anticancer lifestyle. It talks about "our healing powers" and what we can do to contribute to our chances of survival, via the Mix of Six, six interlinked lifestyle areas. It is critical to move forward in multiple areas in parallel to improve our chances of sustaining lifestyle changes and reduce our risk of cancer or recurrence.

It is compulsive reading despite the technical descriptions of some of the processes of cancer behaviour in the early chapters. It's not until nearly half way through (Chapter 6) that we get into the synergy of the Mix of Six and go into each area in detail: social support – social interaction and connectedness, which we all need to pursue this path; stress – we should be energised not stressed; sleep – an important super nutrient; movement/exercise – our bodies are designed to move; food that heals; the environment and the toxins that are in it.

It surprisingly puts social support at the top of the six, describing it as the backbone on which all other lifestyle changes will succeed or fail. It covers support that is logistical and practical, motivating and psychological. For example, volunteering and helping others can have a profound positive effect on the person providing support. "For the past 20 years researchers have gathered correlational data to show cancer patients with a strong social support team survive longer than those without it." Taking care of your body is important but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too. As with focusing on the positive and learning to be grateful, purposeful living leads directly to improved social connections and a sense of belonging.

The Managing Stress chapter goes through stress reduction techniques, e.g. CBT, belly or diaphragmatic breathing, yoga, Tai Chi or Qigong, Being in Nature and Mindfulness, or some form of meditation. This reduces stress, improves wellbeing and helps rewire the brain. For cancer patients, it has been shown to lessen the side effects of chemo, lower cortisol levels, reduce inflammation and calm the mind, which shows significant long-term effects on your body and overall health.

Sleep is maybe an obvious component as part of a healthy lifestyle, but this chapter is revealing and convincing in showing us the benefits of the 7-8 hours of sleep each night for an adult. While you sleep, you are going through a profound round of comprehensive restoration and healing. We need to review 'sleep' and see it as a vital health promoting activity rather than a passive time out.

Exercise/movement. Interesting facts from a study (in the Journal of Clinical Oncology) reinforces the positive benefits of exercise and the negative effects of sitting. It's all about putting movement back into your day; more time standing and moving and less time sitting and being idle. There is an Anti Cancer Living Guide to each of the six areas at the end of each chapter. This one summarises and recommends monitoring your daily movement for a week, then increasing it, breaking up your day with exercise or movement bursts e.g. three brisk 10-minute walks. Also, importantly, breaking up your sitting time by standing up more, e.g. stand to work if possible, stand at meetings or events, stand and walk at every opportunity!

Food as Medicine. There are some incredible statistics about how much cancer could be avoided if people ate more vegetables and fewer doughnuts. When you add a sedentary lifestyle to an unhealthy diet, cancer risk increases by 30%; this means that almost one third of cancers could be prevented if people ate a healthy diet and stayed active. The synergy between healthy foods is also interesting – the study of 1,000 Chinese woman found that the more mushrooms they ate, the lower their breast cancer risk. The researchers found similar effects from green tea, but the effects of doing both reduced the risk even more. The same synergy also occurs with variety in vegetables – the well-known rainbow plate idea. A useful recommendation is to change your mindset, to make vegetables the star of the meal and to change the way you plan and shop.

The Environment. Research at University of Manchester looked at cancer rates spanning millennia and found a strong causal link between industrialisation and the acceleration of cancer. One way to track this link is by looking at cancer clusters and the local environment. The authors identify the seven deadly poisons, including asbestos and Bisphenol A in plastics and the link between them and cancer or other health issues. It also has a useful Environmental Toxin Hit list in Appendix C and recommends various steps to take in the home, reducing the toxins you put in your body and taking care e.g. using mobile phones.

In “Concluding Thoughts”, the author states the impact of *Anti Cancer Living* is truly amazing in that it can inspire others. I feel that it has inspired me too. It is, I believe, essential reading for anyone with a close connection to living with cancer.

Its compelling - I will aim to reread certain sections and the end of chapter guidelines for the Mix of 6. It almost overwhelms you with the amount of facts and information about managing and living with cancer – in a good way! I like the total belief in the subject, I find it compelling and inspirational. Why do you never hear of this approach in the hospitals and doctors surgeries? I will recommend it, although cautiously and only if they are inclined to look forward with a fresh view on lifestyle changes.

Liver cancer patient requiring liver transplant (56-65) (August 2018)

This book is not merely for people with cancer but rather anyone interested in the latest scientific research to potentially reduce your risk of cancer and improve the chances of, and support, recovery after a diagnosis and during treatment.

It really looks at how to make lifestyle changes from a holistic viewpoint, which is what the six pillars or 'mix of six' are based around. All elements of these six recommendations will benefit patients and help carers understand how to support their loved one/friend to employ these. The fundamental and first pillar centres on the power of 'connection' and having social support, which means that carers are already fulfilling a critical element of this plan.

The book is split into two parts: the first provides some background and information on the latest scientific developments and research; the second fully explains the 'mix of six' and the importance and benefits of each.

The authors are a husband-and-wife team; the former, a Professor in Clinical Cancer Prevention, handles the first part, and the latter, an educator, wrote the second part. The book is very easy to read and understand, especially considering the research insight. It is written well in that it flows and clearly has the intended audience in mind. Ultimately its goal is to inform and empower cancer patients (and anyone in fact) and as such it is insightful; I found it a quick read as I was compelled to learn more. I read it twice to review it as initially I found it so absorbing.

It is an appealing book to look at and written in a manner that compels you to keep reading. It is a reasonable length (about 300 pages) with a further 100 pages of appendices. Should you wish to focus on the recommendations or lifestyle choices you can read just the second part. However, the first part is also interesting and short (about 80 pages). Dr Cohen is also a Director of Integrative Medicine and I think this will be a key aspect and increasing consideration to cancer treatment in the future.

I like everything about this book: the content; the style; how it explains some of the latest scientific research in an easy to understand and relatable manner; and particularly the advice for lifestyle changes that support recovery after a cancer diagnosis. There are plenty of references to patients the authors have encountered and what they have observed and learned through their own positions at the MD Anderson Cancer Centre. The fact that they practice what they recommend and adopt their recommendations as a family even though they do not have cancer, shows how much faith they have in the 'mix of six'. The title might appeal only to cancer patients and their families/carers, but the advice and the goal of transforming health relates to everyone, living with cancer or not.

It is incredibly useful to everyone interested in living a healthy life. There is no guarantee of avoiding cancer and the book does not promise that. Rather it provides a framework based on the authors' experiences of treating cancer and supporting patients in their recovery, which is also based on the latest research. The 'mix of six' will benefit individuals if only one of the recommendations is adopted but by combining all six you can optimise them; therefore, for people interested in being proactive in supporting their health, it is a must-read.

I recommend this book to cancer patients without hesitation. It is not a guarantee of remission after diagnosis but rather a support recovery programme to maximise the chances of remission and hopefully minimise an incredibly stressful experience as far as possible. The authors acknowledge how difficult it can be to manage stress if you are living with cancer but provide tips to help minimise stress and build resilience. It also highlights the importance of social support, the power of rest and building movement into daily life, as well as food as medicine, which is often overlooked.

This is a manual for prioritising your health, providing tips and recommendations on how to do so. It is thought provoking. Sadly, we take our health for granted until we no longer have it. By employing the 'mix of six' we may save ourselves the anguish of this in our future or at the very least maximise the benefits of our health when we have it to really make the most of life. For patients these same recommendations could hopefully support their recovery and maximise the effects of any treatments.

**Family member of cancer patients (lymphoma and ocular melanoma) (36-45)
(August 2010)**

I wish this had been around when I was diagnosed and having treatment. It is very good at presenting new and innovative ideas about living with cancer and advice on avoiding cancer. It is aimed at people who have been diagnosed and those that want to avoid cancer, so it is appropriate for everyone with an interest in cancer and innovative thinking. It is well presented, although quite large and some topics are duplicated, or rather revisited, in lots of the chapters.

It has a very positive message and brings new, innovative techniques and thinking to the treatment and avoidance of cancer. It is a useful reference for anyone interested in this holistic approach and some of the techniques described are very motivational. A very good book that I recommend for anyone, particularly cancer patients.

Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (August 2018)

This looks like a big read in a small font with limited pictures and illustrations, which may put some people off, but it contains valuable information. It is about giving yourself, or a relative or friend, the best chance. All oncology doctors and nurses should be aware of it. Lifestyle advice was completely lacking where I was treated and there is now much evidence to support it. It is most useful for helping patients to feel that there is something positive they can contribute to their care, empowering them to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing. It will enable family and friends to support the patient and care better for their own health.

The authors have intentionally put the harder to do things at the beginning of the book. I presume this is to ensure people are made aware of it. When I was ill, I read the original Anti-Cancer book and being able to put lifestyle changes into practice almost immediately really helped me regain a bit of control and feel I was doing something positive. I would have started with the easier changes such as diet and exercise. I fully acknowledge the importance of love, social support and stress reduction but the order may put some people off reading the whole book.

I love the fact that you can affect your outcome significantly through lifestyle changes. This is exactly what I needed to hear when I was ill, and this tells you how to do it. You feel a certain sense of responsibility for your illness (justified or not) and knowing that you can contribute to getting better is helpful mentally and physically.

I previously had breast cancer (46-55) (August 2018)



This is most useful for patients for coping with daily life after diagnosis and/or while undergoing treatment/surgery. The Six-Step sections are informative, helpful and give a positive message. Most importantly it makes people aware of the opportunity to be more in control. Certain sections could also be useful for family and friends.

The book is in a logical order; starting with the “science” and potential causes, then moving on to offering advice, and examples of success stories. It is clearly written, with appropriate language. Some parts could be shorter for ease of reading; the first section needed a lot of concentration for what is quite a sobering read and I struggled to complete it due to its length.

The tone is appropriate, and the layout of each section is clear. A comprehensive section at the back has information on the medical papers relating to the items in the book, and an index. The cover and layout are not overly medical, which will encourage people to read it. The subtitle (The six-step solution to transform your health) may be misleading. The words “solution” and “transform” could suggest certainty to people desperate for a “cure”.

I like how the book is divided into sections, enabling the reader to return easily to a step. This is also useful if the reader wants to share certain sections with others, without them having to read the whole book. The book deals with the scientific information in a way which is understandable to non-medical readers. The summary guides at the end of each of the Mix of Six sections are a useful recap.

The book is quite useful and does give food for thought. I found information I had not previously been aware of and do think it is worth reading as it covers a range of aspects – factual, emotional, guidance on well-being. It is clearly written, informative, and mainly positive. The message of doing everything you can to try to prevent cancer returning, or prolong a patient’s quality of life, is a positive one that is important for anyone who has been or who is affected by cancer. I didn’t dislike anything about the book, but it is too long, and I couldn’t relate to some of the stories, or recommendations for groups, as they are very US based.

I wasn’t sure what to expect and thought it was going to be purely self-help, dealing with wellbeing and emotional aspects. The factual section is a difficult, sometimes depressing read, as it highlights the enormity of the disease. However, I do now feel more informed and will be focussing on the positive aspects of the book.

Ovarian and womb cancer patient (56-65) (January 2019)

This book looks at the science behind cancer and then presents evidence of things that we can all do to reduce our risk of cancer. It also presents ways to improve healing for those who have already received a cancer diagnosis.

I found it very easy to understand and the scientific information presented is at a level that everyone can understand. The content is divided into two halves and all the chapters flow nicely.

I really like how practical this book is. It provides a wealth of information that readers can use to make positive and lasting changes in their health. The information and suggestions provide an active way for people to tackle cancer and play an active role in their own healing.

Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (December 2018)

This is a critical book for anyone wishing to maintain good health and prevent cancer as well as someone diagnosed with cancer who is wondering what they can do to support themselves better. The research goes beyond healthy eating and exercise and describes a mix of six factors that, when combined, can greatly transform your health and cancer diagnosis: social support; managing stress; improving sleep; exercise; diet as medicine; and reducing environmental toxins.

The book is researched thoroughly and well documented. The contents are broken down into two sections and it is easy to find information. The authors are experts, professional doctors in their respective fields, and the language is technical, but terms are explained.

It is a long read, best tackled one chapter at a time. There are many case studies, and references to research, which can be followed up to understand where the authors are getting their evidence from. Points are explained with subheadings and bullet points for further emphasis.

The book focuses more on the changes people can make to help their diagnosis and prevent cancer. It would be useful for someone who is looking to be proactive and make changes to their lifestyle. However, it can seem overwhelming at times; people may feel that if they are not sleeping properly or eating correctly they are somehow to blame for not getting better. The mix of six can seem like a lot to take on and not everyone will have access to support, or the means to eat organic foods.

Sarcoma diagnosed 2008 (26-35) (October 2018)

I will probably recommend this book. It is useful to give a boost of hope and ideas about healthy living, for people with cancer and those without.

It is easy to understand but too long. It would be more interesting if the main points were discussed more briefly; sometimes it can become boring and you lose interest.

My partner and I are cancer survivors (October 2018)

This book is about reducing the risk of cancer, as well as treating cancer once diagnosed, so it is suitable for anyone wishing to reduce their chances of developing cancer and improve their health. It is most useful for possible ways to complement cancer treatment and improve the chances of recovery.

It is divided into two parts. The first is a general discussion about cancer and particularly its prevention. The second gives a more detailed six-part plan. It is quite easy to understand, with little medical terminology. A list of references is provided for those who wish to follow up in more detail. The design is eye catching and tasteful. The paper is good quality and the typeface, font size, and page layout make it easy to read. There are a few charts and diagrams.

I like that the book helps the reader to feel that they have some control over their health, even after a diagnosis of incurable cancer. The six-part plan is clear and detailed. There are steps that everyone can take, even those who are quite unwell. Most of the suggested measures will improve someone's general health and reduce the risk of many diseases, not just cancer.

However, the authors perhaps overstate the results of the studies that they refer to and it could be overwhelming for many people on top of a recent diagnosis. I fear it might encourage health anxiety in some. Also, the authors include anecdotes of patients who have survived much longer than their prognosis and imply that this was due to their lifestyle. Anecdotes are not valid scientific evidence: we cannot make conclusions about causation based on solitary cases and they may give false hope to people with a similar diagnosis and prognosis.

The plan is divided into six parts: social support; stress reduction; sleep; exercise; diet; and environmental toxins. The author believes that all six areas must be addressed to prevent or treat cancer. To follow the plan to the letter would be a significant undertaking, especially for someone dealing with the side-effects of cancer and its treatment. The environmental toxins chapter is particularly intense, with a huge list of ingredients to avoid in all manner of household and toiletry products. What the authors fail to mention is that we are likely to be exposed to many of these toxins in other ways, and that realistically we can't avoid them.

I might recommend it to people interested in making lifestyle changes to improve their health. I expect that most people will not have anywhere near the levels of success as the people in the case studies, but any of the suggested changes could hopefully improve someone's health and quality of life.

Living with stage IV bowel cancer (26-35) (September 2018)

Initially, I found this book hard to read. The tone is quite clinical, and how you feel about this will depend on where you are on your cancer journey, or if you are supporting a loved one with cancer. I have read the book on which this is based ([Anti cancer: a new way of life](#)), in which David Servan-Schreiber writes from his own experience of diagnosis and reoccurrence. This book lacks that same empathy.

Having said that, it is a comprehensive guide with information on the six pillars of health and well-being. The book is clearly arranged into the six pillars and each section is summarised at the end for a quick, go-to recap. It includes the latest advice on more well-known aspects such as diet and exercise, which most of us think of first when it comes to good health and well-being. It also includes topics that other books sometimes miss: the importance of rest and recovery; love and emotional support; stress and resilience; and environmental factors. The section on The Cancer Hallmarks is fascinating but also scary and The Environmental Toxin Hit List is handy to check everyday products such as skin care or household cleaning products; it explains how these nasties affect our endocrine system.

It is a very lengthy book. As it says on the cover, it is based on the latest science and clinical trials and is therefore very heavy on statistics and includes some 80 pages of references. It also includes several case studies of American cancer patients; UK readers might find it difficult to relate to some of these. It can be a bit heavy on medical terminology, which can make it hard to follow in places; it would help if the authors explained some of the terminology more clearly. The authors state that neither of them have experienced a cancer diagnosis but family members have; some of the advice seems clinical and the tone is lacking emotion and understanding, which can be tough if you have recently been diagnosed or are having treatment. However, it does include a lot of up-to-date and useful information.

It could be useful for anyone. For someone living with cancer, it may be a bit long-winded to read, especially if you have chemo brain. For carers, it will depend on how much detail they want to read about each subject. Carers want to feel that they're supporting their loved ones, and this book will be helpful in making healthy choices and lifestyle decisions.

Living with breast cancer (46-55) (September 2018)

This book is huge. It contains over 400 pages of densely laid out small text; it is unremitting in its layout, and potential readers are immediately given the impression that this is not a light read. The authors' writing style is warm and friendly, however, and the presentation of the book is such – with subtitled paragraphs and sections – that readers can skip through certain parts if they choose to.

The main message is that people can avoid getting cancer, and deal with a cancer diagnosis even at an advanced stage, by attending to six principles of lifestyle choices: connect with social support; manage stress and build resilience; make time for rest and recovery; build movement into your day; treat food as medicine; and avoid environmental toxins. It is likely that we have heard about all these before, with reference to good health and mind-body connections, but this book addresses them individually in some depth, which is unique.

What I found frustrating about the reading experience is the constant inclusion of anecdotes of people they know who have taken on these lifestyle choices and are still healthy many years following terminal diagnosis. We read about these people in detail, and about the pronouncements of doctors and others who either agree or (oddly enough) disagree with the principles of healthy living.

I do not think that we learn anything new or controversial in this book; however, the constant bombardment of information does have an effect that the reader cannot ignore. The book is written with the American healthcare system in mind, so there may be some anomalies for those reading it in the UK. I am glad to have read it, and it has reminded me of the importance of the mind-body relationship to health – with emphasis on mental health and the importance of movement and diet.

I would have given this book five stars if the authors had condensed the content into a shorter book with fewer anecdotes.

Former health professional. Friend (56-65) (May 2018)



Overall, an interesting book for anyone to read around anti-cancer living. It is useful for reducing the risk and, hopefully, helping to prolong life after diagnosis.

It is user friendly and easy to understand, and there is a good appendix and collection of notes at the end. The cover is appealing to the eye, the paper is not as good a quality as that in some books, but the font is a good, readable size. There are no photos, and few illustrations.

This is a handy resource for anyone to read. However, it is written with an American slant, so in places it needs adapting for UK use.

Family member (56-65) (March 2019)

It is hard to know the audience for this book. A quarter is taken up by appendices, notes and references. It seems to be aimed somewhere between the general reader and the health professional. It is written mainly from the perspective of American studies and consumer protection, so will be more helpful for American readers.

It is easy to understand, the cover is eye catching, and the content is laid out well. There are no photos, but there are graphs, and boxes that highlight some points. I found it interesting at first and thought I would enjoy reading it, but after the first few chapters, it became hard to read due to the repetition. I also found it very American.

I like that it tries to simplify the options to make lifestyle changes and describes how this can impact on your health. It gives references for people who want to find out more about the different studies and reviews. The case studies are good for reading.

I found it helpful at times and thought I would pass it on to people I know but the further I read the less I enjoyed it and the less likely that seemed.

Living with breast cancer (56-65) (December 2018)

I think this is most useful for health professionals – it is heavily supported by research and scientific evidence, with which health professionals are more comfortable. It validates information that is already out there in various forms but would encourage health professionals to work with their patients through sign posting. Some of the topics would make good and interesting discussions for support groups where individual needs can be accommodated. It's a heavy read for people on their own.

The layout is clear, but the font is small and there are only a few illustrations to break up the text. Some parts are straightforward to understand, others need to be read in bite-sized chunks.

I like that the information is supported by research; this raises its credibility and status. I also like the scenarios based on real experiences of people who have made lifestyle changes. This is reflected in their quality of life, regardless of prognosis, and has given them back some control. The holistic approach clearly informs of the importance of engaging in all aspects of life, not just one, if true benefits are to be gained. It explains not just the body but engages with the power of internal healing where physical and psychological health needs to work as one for the desired outcome; this requires people to let go of some of their current practices and adopt new approaches, be it diet, activity, stress reduction, relaxation, or support networks.

Cancer can have a serious financial impact. People in a privileged position can make changes that others cannot. Diana, for example, resorted to extreme lifestyle changes requiring huge financial resources. The reality for others of family and other responsibilities makes it difficult, if not impossible, to make drastic changes; it can leave someone at a vulnerable time feeling it is all or nothing. For this reason, it is quite useful to read this book in a group setting where other options can be explored

Living with breast cancer (56-65) (August 2018)



This book is easy to understand, and I like the case studies, but I am worried that it will put pressure on cancer patients to eat only certain foods or cause anxiety if they don't have a positive outlook. There is not much scientific evidence to support the assertions that diet can cure cancer or that people living with a negative attitude have a poorer prognosis.

Family member of cancer patient (lung, liver, cervical) (26-35) (September 2018)

This is written with six specific areas in mind; social support; stress management; rest and recovery; exercise; nutrition; and the environment. It could be useful, but at the same time it could be dangerous; much of the evidence is not peer reviewed or scientifically proven. It's an unappealing read. The tiny font makes reading difficult as does the sheer size of the book and the enormity of content. The cover is boring.

I'm sure that I am probably the only one who views this book with caution. I think that it is written from too pure a point of view. The authors are two eminent and well-qualified people, but there is something that I find quite preachy and almost scolding about the text; as though, if you do not do all these things, you are doomed and need to stand in the corner or sit on the naughty step.

I did not read it from cover to cover. I dipped in and out, but what I read worried me: it pertains to an almost perfect lifestyle – no toxins, no sugar, no dry cleaning unless from an eco-friendly cleaner, meditate, practise mindfulness, only have wooden floors in the home. The list goes on. Whilst I agree that these could be good ideas, for many people they are unachievable and unrealistic. As I read, I wanted to say to the authors, "...and in the real world?".

Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) (46-55) (June 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.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

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