

PEACE  
IN THE FACE OF  
CANCER



LYNNEIB

*Author of When God & Cancer Meet*

I never imagined that cancer would be a battle I would have to face. If you're going through it now, I'm sure you feel blindsided like I did. It's hard to put into words what it feels like to get the devastating diagnosis and then make the choice to bravely persevere no matter what. Lynn has a special way with words. *Peace in the Face of Cancer* is the kind of book I wish I had had while I was going through treatments. You will be encouraged and motivated throughout this book because it is not about cancer; it's about rising above your circumstances and finding peace regardless of what life throws at you.

JIM KELLY

NFL Hall of Fame quarterback

When you hear the word *cancer*, it seems that the whole world stops. This book shows the way to get moving again. The journey is not an easy one, and as Harper Lee wrote, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." Lynn helps cancer patients and caregivers better understand one another's "point of view" so together—and with the Lord as guide and comforter—you can survive this walk.

REGGIE ANDERSON

Physician; author of *Appointments with Heaven* and  
*The One Year Book of Healing*

Lynn offers another treasure trove of wisdom, humor, and personal vignettes that is practical, uplifting, and spiritually inspiring. The clever and appropriate use of famous people quotes, as well as stories from individual survivors, caregivers, and medical professionals, is very humanizing and moving. I love the relevant biblical passages, especially as they reinforce God's love and grace for us.

JANE RICE

Breast cancer survivor, support group founder, and philanthropist

As a licensed psychologist and a cancer survivor still fighting the battle, I found *Peace in the Face of Cancer* inspiring, informative, and incredibly helpful! Whether it is you or a loved one confronting cancer, this life-affirming book will enable you to experience God's peace in your hearts and in your homes.

GEORGIA SHAFFER

Author, credentialed Christian life coach, and  
PA licensed psychologist; [www.georgiashaffer.com](http://www.georgiashaffer.com)

What Lynn Eib offers in *Peace in the Face of Cancer* is not a bunch of theoretical self-help principles but real, where-the-shoe-leather-hits-the-pavement wisdom. It's practical, it's honest, it's useful *today*. I'm going to keep this book handy for rereading.

MIKE DELLOSSO

Cancer survivor, author of *Centralia*, *Kill Devil*, and  
*Darlington Woods*; [www.mikedellossobooks.com](http://www.mikedellossobooks.com)

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## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

BECAUSE I'M A NEWSPAPER reporter turned author, I like to start with facts and let them create feelings. The “facts” I share in all my books are true stories, as well as truth from God. My intent in this book is that they inspire in you feelings of hope, courage, comfort, and especially peace as you face cancer in your life or your loved one's.

I've noticed that the more books I write, the more I relax and the more of my personal—not just professional—self shows through. This is book number five (not counting the inspirational commentary for the *He Cares* New Testament), so I've really chilled on this one.

I've gone ahead and let my quirky sense of humor show. For ages I've used it with cancer patients and their caregivers as a way to lift spirits during difficult times, but that's easier done in person than in a book. So I hope those comments make you smile and not just wonder about my sanity.

I also decided to choose a quote from a famous person or character to introduce each chapter theme. I spent quite a bit of time selecting these and trust they amuse and/or

resonate with you as much as they did with me. I realize that not all these people share my faith, but I like the quotes and think that God can put truth into anyone's mouth.



I'm actually a rather reluctant author. I always wanted to write, but I never had the desire to pen a whole book. From the time I was ten years old and in a seventh-grade journalism class, all I ever wanted to be was a newspaper reporter. My ambition never changed, and I obtained my college journalism degree. During a fascinating newspaper career, I covered a Pennsylvania Ku Klux Klan rally; investigated whether major oil companies were duping customers at the gas pumps; interviewed F. Lee Bailey, the defense attorney for O. J. Simpson and the person to whom the Boston Strangler confessed; and even won an international award for stories on the dangers of firefighting. But in the last couple of decades, I have been "reporting" on a different subject: amazing and encouraging ways I've seen God at work in people's lives—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

All the folks I write about are real people, and the details about them are accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am not good at making things up. So I tell true cancer survivor stories and share true biblical hope. I like to think of myself as a passionate encourager who is always a truth teller.

At the end of this book I've added three bonus chapters

especially for those facing cancer that is not considered curable. I know so many people who are in this situation that I wanted to address some of their particular needs. Even if your cancer or your loved one's is cured or potentially curable, I believe the truths and stories there will encourage you as well. Finally, each chapter ends with what I call a "Path to Peace"—a few words intended to pour truth into your mind and peace into your heart.

Thanks for picking up this book—whether for yourself or for someone else. I have been praying for you to truly experience peace in the face of cancer.

*Blessings of hope,*

*Lynn*

PS Some of the peace-filled Bible verses I share are from a translation called *The Voice Bible*, and when you see italics in them, those words are *supplementary information* supplied by the editors to help readers unfamiliar with the story and/or the ancient world to understand the context in which the words originally were spoken or written.



*My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do it with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.*

MAYA ANGELOU

I REMEMBER GOING in for my five-year cancer checkup and gleefully announcing to my oncologist, Dr. Marc Hirsh, that I wouldn't be seeing him professionally anymore.

"Where did you get that idea?" he responded.

"It's five years; I'm cured!" I told him, surprised he was unaware of such a momentous occasion.

"Well, the chance the cancer will return has diminished greatly, but you still need to be checked for the rest of your life," Marc replied.

I felt as if my winning lottery ticket had been declared a forgery. After five *whole* years of waiting to be proclaimed cured, there was going to be no such official announcement.

Of course, back then I thought there were only two alternatives regarding cancer: sick or cured.

Thankfully, I learned there's a crucial third distinction: survivor. The National Cancer Institute says that's what we become "from the time of diagnosis until the end of life."<sup>1</sup> So survivors include folks who have just found out they have cancer, people who used to have cancer, and those who can expect always to have it. I'm pretty sure that includes everybody who has ever heard those three dreaded words: "You have cancer."

As I write, there are an estimated 14.5 million people in the United States with a history of cancer, and about the same number of new diagnoses is expected worldwide this year. That's an incredible total of survivors, but I wonder how many fit *only* the first dictionary definition of *survive*: "to remain alive or in existence"? And how many *also* portray the second meaning: "to continue to function or prosper"?

Functioning and prospering sound a great deal better to me than simply being alive and existing. If you agree and want to see how you or your survivor loved one also can be a "thrifer," keep reading!

I think bestselling author and poet Maya Angelou's mission statement is a perfect one to apply to our post-diagnosis lives. I've been living as a survivor since 1990, when I was diagnosed with colon cancer at the age of thirty-six. My girls were eight, ten, and twelve at the time, and now I'm a grandmother to six. In the ensuing years, my mission, like Ms. Angelou's, has been not only to survive, but to *thrive*, and I've dedicated my life to helping

cancer patients and their caregivers do the same. In 1991 I founded what is now the country's oldest faith-based cancer support group. And from 1996 to 2015, I had a unique position in my oncologist's office as a patient advocate offering emotional and spiritual support to his patients and their families.

Between my former job, my cancer prayer support groups, and my speaking engagements, I literally have held the hands of thousands of people facing this disease. I count it a real privilege to walk with hurting people, whether the ones with the medical chart or the ones standing nervously by. But despite the huge number of my acquaintances who have been touched by cancer (including about 90 percent of my Facebook friends!), I never would presume to know *exactly* what you or your loved ones are going through. Each patient and caregiver journey is unique, but chances are good that you and I have experienced some of the same feelings over the years. And chances are very good that I know someone who has been in a similar medical situation to yours. And I think it's especially likely that you, like me, at times have trouble finding peace in the face of cancer.

It's definitely difficult to feel peace . . . but it *is* possible.

I know it's possible because I have been there, done that, and because I've known scores of others who are finding peace even though they thought they couldn't. In these pages, I'll share some of their true, hope-filled stories to encourage you that a survivor also can be a "thrivor,"

and hopefully I'll do it with passion, compassion, humor, and style!

Some of the people you will meet in this book are in treatment or have finished treatment with the hope that their cancer will be cured and never come back. Many (like me) were told there was a high chance the cancer would reappear, but guess what? No one on this earth really knows. (I'm still here, cancer-free, defying the 40 percent survival rate given me.) Still others you will encounter here have been told the cancer is "treatable, not curable" or will never go away. Despite that grim prognosis, some of those folks are in remission, and a few even have no signs of cancer!

And all of these survivors and their caregivers are peace seekers.

They are people like you who want to experience tranquility and contentment no matter what the diagnosis or prognosis. I'll share their peace-seeking, peacekeeping stories so this book can become a volume of "portable peace" for you. Take it with you to read during treatment or while waiting at doctors' offices or before you put your head on the pillow each night.

You see, I truly believe finding peace requires a two-pronged approach. It will take effort on our part. There are specific things we can do or not do to help create calm in our homes, our minds, and our hearts. And it will take trust on our part because there are amazing things that only God can do for us and in us.

When I received my stage 3 colon cancer diagnosis, I had surgery and then started on a plan to do twelve months of weekly chemotherapy. I say “plan” because I was so allergic to one of the drugs that my oncologist recommended I quit after six months. I quickly agreed! When I finished treatment in February 1991, I made the mistake of asking Marc what we would do if the cancer came back. There was a long pause, and I could tell he was choosing his words carefully. Without waiting for his measured answer, I exclaimed, “I’m a goner, right?”

“Well, I wouldn’t put it like that,” he responded. “But if it does come back, it probably will come back within two years, and you will die very quickly. We don’t have any more approved treatments to give you.”

As you might imagine, that conversation put quite a damper on my peace of mind! However, slowly but surely, God began speaking to my heart, letting me know that *whether* I lived or died was up to Him but *how* I lived was up to me. So very early on I chose to think of myself as a survivor, even though I hadn’t yet reached any magical five-year cancer-free mark and no physician had pronounced me cured. I chose to live however many days, months, or decades I had remaining as a thriver.

I chose *peace*.

And now I’m praying that you do too. Here’s what I think is going to happen as you read this book:

Because of God's tender mercy,  
the morning light from heaven is about to break  
upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide us to the path of peace.

LUKE 1:78-79

**Peace begins** when we think of ourselves  
or our loved ones as survivors and  
together find the path of peace.

