



# Being Well (Even When You're Sick): Mindfulness Practices for People with Cancer and Other Serious Illnesses

By Elana Rosenbaum

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Mindfulness is a quality of attention that combines full awareness with acceptance of each moment, just as it is. This book presents simple mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques and insights for people with cancer and other serious illnesses. The message is that it is possible to be well and to feel at ease even when one is sick. The book provides guidance readers can use throughout treatment and beyond to reduce stress and to cultivate a sense of courage, appreciation of life as it is, and even happiness. The author, a psychotherapist, cancer survivor, and longtime teacher of mindfulness techniques, writes with compassion and wisdom, and has created a book that will be a practical companion for anyone coping with the emotional challenges of dealing with cancer or other serious illness. Includes a downloadable companion 60-minute audio program with five simple mindfulness practices.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“Speaking directly from her life experience, Elana Rosenbaum offers a rich variety of practical and compassionate mindfulness teachings and practices—wisdom particularly tailored to those who find themselves facing life-threatening illness. Certainly many readers will be helped immensely by both the teachings and the methods, whether these are new ideas to them or treasured, familiar ones.”—Sharon Salzberg, author of *Real Happiness*

“Reading this book is like sitting beside a dear friend when you need it the most. Savor this book for a few hours (don’t wait until you’re sick!) and notice the difference it makes.”—Christopher Germer, PhD, author of *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*

“This is a subtle and powerful book, a masterpiece of simplicity, clarity, and caring. It is profoundly inspiring and at the same time, extremely practical.”—from the foreword by Jon Kabat-Zinn

“Elana Rosenbaum wears gravity well. The maelstrom of cancer has swept her far beneath the waves and she has arisen repeatedly in celebration of life! Because of this, her buoyancy is trustworthy, wise, and delightfully light. Through story, poetry, unflinching transparency, and dozens of simple, straightforward awareness exercises she helps us hold ourselves more kindly, see ourselves more clearly, and discover our inborn capacity to wade into the great sea of uncertainty with curiosity and ease. Filled with gusto, grit, and gladness, this generous book is a guide and manifesto celebrating the possibility of feeling greater freedom in the midst of adversity, illness, and the everyday challenge of being a human being no matter what our condition.”—Saki Santorelli, EdD, MA, Executive Director, Center for Mindfulness in Medicine

“Written out of the experience of her own cancer and stem cell transplant, where, as she says, ‘anything can happen, including death,’ Elana Rosenbaum’s wonderful book shows how serious illness forces us to ‘drop the script’ and find inspiration in the present moment, even in (especially in) the moment where fear is unavoidable. This is an important book for all affected by serious and life-threatening illness, for families and friends. Every page has something precious to savor, born from long years of mindfulness practice and teaching at UMass, the home of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Elana is never prescriptive: she does not tell us what to think or what to do. Yet she shows how to remain open to new possibilities in the face of what we most fear, and how the illness itself can become a wellspring of heartfulness and healing. She shows how mindfulness is not an alternative to medicine, but integrates with it at every stage; that defining ourselves not by our illness but by our intrinsic worth nourishes a courage that we might never have thought possible.”—Mark Williams, author of *Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World*

“Elana Rosenbaum has provided a simple-to-follow roadmap to guide those with serious illness to achieve a high level of comfort to living in the moment. This book is ideal for those in need as well as their supporters.”—Arnold S. Freedman MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School

“Occasionally there is a book that can make a real difference in a person’s life. *Being Well* is one of those books. Anyone living with serious illness will find comfort, direction, solace, and hope in its pages. It offers a practical road map to mindful living and living well, even in very difficult circumstances. Ms. Rosenbaum shares her personal experiences with cancer as well as those of many patients whom she has helped find balance and repose. I will be recommending it to my patients and including some of her techniques in my

own meditations.”—Hester Hill Schnipper, LICSW, author of *After Breast Cancer: A Common-Sense Guide to Life After Treatment*, and a two-time cancer survivor

#### About the Author

Elana Rosenbaum, MS, LICSW, is a leader in the clinical application of mindfulness meditation to cancer care. After she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1995, her ability to embody mindfulness in the face of adversity led to the development of a mindfulness-based intervention for bone marrow transplant patients at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Emory University, and Dana Farber Cancer Institute. She is adjunct faculty at the renowned Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where she worked with Jon Kabat-Zinn as one of the pioneering teachers. She's been educating patients and healthcare professionals in mindfulness for over twenty-five years. Elana has a private practice in psychotherapy in Worcester, Massachusetts, and is a sought-after teacher, speaker, workshop leader, and research consultant.

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