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Everything Changes: The Insider's Guide To Cancer In Your 20's And 30's



Synopsis

By page three of the introduction to *Everything Changes*, I wanted not only to devour the rest of the book, but I wanted to call Kairol up, get to know her, and (if we weren't both already married) see if I could sleep with her. Then the book got really good. It is, without doubt, the most forthright, emotionally sophisticated, and plain-old valuable book of its kind I've seen. The book defines and exemplifies what the verb 'fight' really means: to arm, prepare, and engage in sustained effort to gain a desired end. If that's your mission, this is your instruction manual.

—Evan Handler, actor and author of *Time On Fire* and *It's Only Temporary: The Good News and the Bad News of Being Alive* (and a guy who got well from acute myeloid leukemia in 1985)

On a shoestring budget and with tape recorder in hand, Kairol Rosenthal emerged from treatment and hit the road in search of other twenty- and thirtysomething cancer survivors. From the Big Apple to the Bible Belt, she dusted the sugarcoating off of the young adult cancer experience, exposing the gritty and compelling stories of twenty-five complete strangers. The men and women in *Everything Changes* confess their most vulnerable moments, revealing cancer experiences they never told anyone else—everything from what they thought about at night before going to bed to what they wish they could tell their lovers but were too afraid to. With irreverent flare and practical wisdom, *Everything Changes* includes stories, how-to resources, and expert advice on issues that are important for young adult cancer patients, including:

- Dating and sex
- Medical insurance and the healthcare system
- Faith and spirituality
- Employment and career
- Fertility and adoption
- Friends and family

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Customer Reviews

After being diagnosed with thyroid cancer at the age of 27, Rosenthal, a choreographer and now a patient advocate for young adults with cancer, crisscrossed the country, interviewing other young cancer victims. Rosenthal's text is part guidebook, part true confessions (including her own), as she segues between intimate conversations and sound advice on topics ranging from dating and parenting to working the health-care system and coping with pain. The interviews are riveting and reveal a youthful perspective on cancer (one girl goes to chemo wearing goth makeup; others worry about when to confide in a lover). As she talks with 25 young adults of varying backgrounds, the author points out that many are not diagnosed until their symptoms are advanced, often because they've been dismissed by doctors who say they are too young to have cancer, or because they have lost their health insurance during the transition from college to jobs. Rosenthal notes that 70,000 young adults between the ages of 20 and 39 are diagnosed with cancer each year, and 25% do not survive. Though at times the volleying between Rosenthal's own story and those of her subjects is disorienting, the work as a whole is poignant, raw and informative. The text will provide needed support and valuable resources for young adults, their parents, friends and caregivers. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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I am so glad I found this book. I am 29 with stage 3 melanoma. It is really hard to find others my age that are going through or have gone through what I am currently going through. None of my friends have a clue. I needed to read these stories of other incredible young adults that have SO many of the same thoughts and feelings toward dealing with cancer. So many times I said out loud, "YES! Exactly! Thank you!". I needed confirmation that the thoughts I have are not crazy... they're incredibly normal. I can't express enough how important this was for me to read, especially right now.

Marginally useful to someone who is, as the book is intended for, a Young Adult cancer survivor (then patient). In some places info was very unspecific, such as on Living Wills/Advance Directives, etc--it basically said "see a lawyer"--no broad overview or even anecdotes.

As a 22 year old recently diagnosed with cancer, I have had a difficult time finding books that address the thoughts, concerns, and experiences of being young and having cancer. I have been reluctant to join a support group, yet have had a difficult time not having others to relate to. 'Everything Changes', for me, bridged that gap and served essentially as a support- with stories, fears, and experiences I could relate to, relayed in an authentic and pure way. The collaboration stories (Rosenthal's and the patients she interviewed), and the resources provided at the end of each chapter have helped me a great deal and would be of great value to any young adult experiencing cancer. 'Everything changes' is quite universal in approach, as rather than sharing just one cancer patient's experience like most other books on this topic, Rosenthal includes quotations and excerpts from many cancer patients she has interviewed; i.e. individuals who differ in gender, race & ethnicity, type of cancer and stage, and socio-economic status. This is, in my mind, the greatest strength of this book, it is not limited in scope, nor is it overly optimistic. Instead, it is realistic yet hopeful. One does not feel as though they are being preached to while reading it, but instead, attending a support group of real people sharing their experiences. I would recommend this to cancer patients, their families, and friends. From my own experience I have learned that many friends my age have had very little exposure to cancer, Rosenthal's book paints a clear picture of what living with cancer is truly like--not the romanticized version portrayed on lifetime movies.

"When I woke up the morning after my diagnosis, my first thought was the opposite of 'Why me?' Why not me?" Through her unique writing style, Kairol Rosenthal seamlessly interjects

soul-searching questions into her prose. These questions feel as though they had always been sitting quietly within waiting for the right time to sprout. What does life look like when everything changes? Ask a young adult cancer patient. Dealing with thyroid cancer herself, Kairol Rosenthal decided to do just that. Everything Changes arms patients with the knowledge and comfort that accompany realizing that others are on similar journeys, placing one foot in front of the other, negotiating a path that is no longer a narrow barren dark tunnel. Everything Changes symbolizes a giant step forward for the young adult cancer community. And so today, as Kairol Rosenthal writes, Everything Changes. We are simply moving forward. I wholeheartedly believe in this book and am grateful to Kairol for dedicating so much of herself in order to bring this book to the general public.

As a nurse, and someone who is completing her doctoral dissertation on young adult oncology, I thought this would give me a good patient perspective on some of my endeavors and had minimal expectations. It was real, gritty, thoughtful, and beautifully written. One of the most accurate accounts I've ever read. It was emotionally cathartic and a must read for providers as well as patients.

I wish this book was available when I was first diagnosed with cancer 10 years ago. This is my favorite book on a topic that can be quite depressing - yet this book makes me feel better about my present and future. I found that the individual narratives throughout the book described what I felt at the time. You are young, just starting life and then you are told you have cancer. In this economy if you are in your 20's and 30's you are lucky if you have a job, more fortunate if you have health insurance and your plans for a career take a distant priority to a worst case scenario that you didn't quite expect to be facing. It includes topics like taking the time to develop healthy relationships, health insurance or lack of, and how your worldview can be re-focused in a more positive direction due to a diagnosis nobody would ever wish for. One of the few books on the topic that addresses the needs of the LGBT community.

I purchased this for a family member in her 30s upon recommendation from someone else in that same age range.

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