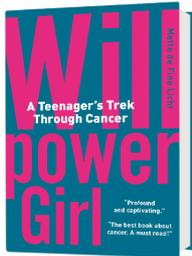




Mette de Fine Licht

Author of 10 books
Speaker
Book advisor.



Willpower Girl
— **A Teenager's Trek Through Cancer**

Published February 1, 2017.

In the Author's Studio

Why did you write a book about having cancer?

I wanted primarily to give young people who have cancer the kind of book that I wish had been available when I was sick. There are plenty of books on the disease, but none that have been written for teenagers by someone who had cancer in their youth.

What is your message with the book?

Cancer is a struggle, and success in life takes hard work and is never guaranteed. BUT — with willpower — a great deal can be accomplished. Willpower wasn't what saved me, though. There were two physiological reasons that explain why I am alive today: 1) The cancer had not spread. 2) My body tolerated the chemo. But I saw what happened to my fellow patients who did not have the willpower ... who didn't have the support of a road crew ... They were the ones that had the hardest time making it. I hope that *Willpower Girl* can instill courage and offer hope to anyone experiencing adversity right now. This applies to people who are themselves suffering from cancer and those who know and can support someone who is sick. I also hope that it prevents survivors from being cast in the role of victim for the rest of their lives.

Your story is a tough one. How does the illness impact you today?

Although I don't think about the disease in my daily life, it is part of my identity. It sounds like a cliché, but today I know myself inside and out. I know what makes me happy and what doesn't. That's why I am able to orient toward my happiness and wellbeing, and that is a reward. But I would never say that the disease was a gift and that I wouldn't have become who I am without it, the way that I often hear people say when they have survived a crisis. Cancer is ugly and horrific, and no one deserves to experience anything similar to what I went through. The disease left me with a prosthetic leg that significantly limits my physical activities. I can't go for walks, take out the garbage or carry heavy shopping bags, and I will never play sports again — and that's an ongoing struggle for me to accept. But I survived. Every time I run my hands through my hair to confirm that it is really there, I feel glad.

What was it like writing a book about yourself?

I wrote *Willpower Girl* in a period of two weeks based on the diaries I kept during the time I was ill. It was extremely hard and required a lot of solitude, but the act of writing was also a necessary therapeutic process. I have no interest in sitting in a psychologist's office talking to a strange therapist who is looking over his glasses at me. I write my way through and out of things, and in doing that I can help myself and others who might benefit from my experiences. But it was a grotesque situation to have a euphoric feeling of being in the midst of rich, creative flow while writing about a subject so painful.

For further information or to schedule a consultation, contact Mette de Fine Licht at mette@willpowergirl.com or look into www.willpowergirl.com