

As Long As You Have Books, You're Never Alone

Carola Schmidt

Stories are as old as humanity.

Humans have always needed to share their own experiences and keep tracking history and stories. To write is to belong. Cancer is not as old as stories and humanity. It's much older than that. Cancer is as old as the first eukaryotic cells.

Commonly, after receiving the diagnosis of cancer, the first action someone takes is to search for everything they can about the disease. A study published on the British Journal of Cancer (by Jenkins, Fallowfield and Saul) showed that 87% of the patients interviewed wanted all possible information. The results from that large sample provided conclusive evidence that the vast majority of patients with [cancer want a great deal of specific information](#) concerning their illness and treatment.

The availability of the multidisciplinary team, groups of discussion with other patients, and psychological care help not only the understanding and mindfulness but also the choices that should be made during the

treatment.

Since books go through a long process that includes beta readers —between professionals, patients, and readers—editing, proofreading, and many eyes during the publishing process, they can be a trustworthy resource if well-chosen. There are many [books about cancer](#) out there. To pick the right ones, we should think about personal needs. But be careful with miraculous promises and diets.



Food and [diets don't cure cancer](#). Any book that makes this promise is a scam.

[Chemotherapy](#) and other drugs, [radiotherapy](#), [surgery](#) and some cellular therapies—such as CAR-T cells, can cure cancer.

Emotionally vulnerable patients should take care to do not buy books that offer false promises and can even be harmful.

A bookcase with some different books about cancer can help at different moments and bring knowledge and comfort.

There are books about cancer of almost every kind, and with not much money you can have a batch of good books from Amazon or Barnes & Noble. Some were written by professionals; others, from a patient or survivor [point of view](#). There are books to help understand the disease, to talk about [cancer with kids](#), for spiritual healing, to help the acceptance and quality of life, to guide through the treatment, mindfulness, and to tell what to expect from this new journey.

Books about cancer are also wonderful gifts.

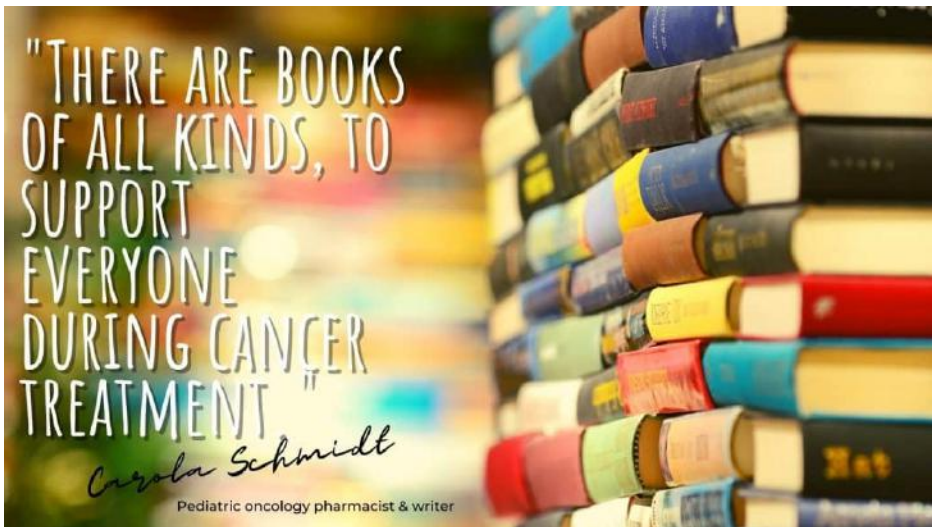
When a [friend or familiar has cancer](#), it's hard to find the right words. Gifts are great to help people to express their feelings and support with no words.

Every person has a different need. I published several books on pediatric oncology through Springer Nature. I also have also written for children. "Chubby's Tale: The true story of a teddy bear who beat cancer" was published because of a necessity to explain cancer, [treatment and hair loss](#) to children. Chubby was well-received and even entered the BookAuthority list of "81 Best Leukemia Books of All Time."

I knew that I could do more books because there are many necessities regarding books on cancer. Many people would like to

gift a book to support a friend but wouldn't want a book about disease and treatment. They look for a book with no mention of cancer and treatment, which addresses friendship and happiness.

To support a friend. I wrote "[Bald is Beautiful: A letter for a fabulous girl](#)," which is about baldness, beauty, happiness, and friendship. Bald is Beautiful, unlike 'Chubby', has no mention of disease or [chemotherapy](#). Both were well-received; each one for different needs.



When I started to write non-scientific books about cancer, I also started to know other writers who, like me, write different books about the same disease.

I knew Gogs Gagnon, a [prostate cancer](#) survivor who published an important book to let men know what to expect during and

after the diagnosis of prostate cancer. Gogs tells the reader what he would do differently, describe exams, treatment and how he had to understand the disease, make choices and keep his feelings under control—at the same time. “[Prostate Cancer Strikes: Navigating the Storm](#),” by Gogs Gagnon, is one of those precious books in which the author gives his hand to the reader.

The right books help to heal.

Gogs, before becoming a writer, read 35-40 books as a patient. I have not only a bookcase but a whole house full of books—many of them are about cancer. It’s cozy to have books waiting for you, at any time, and for whatever you need.

For spiritual healing of Christians who have to deal with cancer, there is a wonderful resource, “[Cross of a Different Kind: Cancer & Christian Spirituality](#),” by Anthony Amaranise. He is a [childhood cancer](#) survivor and Benedictine, a scholar who has the answers when Christians think “why me?”

“[Journey: Dum Spiro Spero](#)” is a book about a brave boy who inspires thousands of people on Twitter who cheer for him. He fights against [bone cancer](#) and shares his story. His family makes all efforts to provide him the best care—which resulted from a bad prognosis to a new perspective. This journey is through darkness into light, as his father, Jeff W Goodwin, the author, says about it. This book included a DVD and gathers profits for Alex’s treatment when readers buy it on Amazon.

When a friend or familiar has cancer, it's hard to find the right words.



There are books of all kinds, to support everyone during cancer treatment.

They illuminate the hard moments and help readers to make choices. When we open them, we realize they are much more versatile than they look. And when someone asks how these books work, as my friend Anthony Maranise wrote, the short answer is “However you want.”



Carola Schmidt is a pediatric oncology pharmacist & writer. She

has several books on pediatric oncology, published by Springer Nature, as well as children's books about cancer, such as "Chubby's Tale: The true story of a teddy bear who beat cancer," and "Bald is Beautiful: A letter for a fabulous girl." Her background includes oncology and hematology, pediatric oncology and hematology, neonatology, stem cell transplantation, intensive care units, infectious diseases, and academic experience teaching medical residents of Pediatric Oncology Hematology Program, pharmacists residents of Child and Adolescent Health Program, and teaching in post-graduation courses. She is a specialist in Oncological Hospital Pharmacy and has an MBA in Business Management.

Further reading

["Stop Telling Me To Be Brave" Campaign To Support People With Cancer](#)

[Six tips to help you talk about your cancer](#)

[Why I Wrote The Book: Dear God From Your Poached Egg Breast](#)