

BOOK REVIEWS

Living Well With Cancer: A Solution-Focused Approach by Dominic Bray

Louise Bower Hatchard 

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Living Well With Cancer: A Solution-Focused Approach By Dominic Bray
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£25.99 paperback

Review by Louise Bower-Hatchard

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This book differs from many of the others aiming to help people to live well with cancer; it does not give any diet or lifestyle advice, instead focusing primarily on the ability of the solution focused approach to uncover what a good life means for each of us. Later in the book the focus shifts to how to be the expert in your own life, even when dealing with clinical experts in your diagnosis. There are also some examples of both excellent and less sensitive clinical responses from a patient point of view that serve to highlight the range of responses that patients receive, with best practice suggestions for both patients and clinicians.

For people with no previous knowledge of the solution focused approach, the book explains it well and gives good examples of dialogues comparing a traditional with a more solution focused approach. For those who are familiar with solution focused approaches but less confident in using these approaches with cancer patients, the book provides warm reassurance of the success of the solution focused questions in helping cancer patients to live their life as richly as possible and gives example dialogues of conversations. There are cartoons that helpfully illustrate key points made in the text, references, recommendations for further reading, QR codes for additional resources and some useful diagrams explaining the changing dynamics over time within a solution focused conversation.

I do unfortunately have first hand experience of being a cancer patient and found the tone and pace of the book refreshingly blunt. The reality of the devastation of diagnosis and the risk of living in constant anxiety of the cancer re-occurring is acknowledged and responded to helpfully and well. The author states simply and honestly that most cancer-survivor's lives never return to 'normal' again. The silver lining experienced by many cancer survivors is described beautifully; *"The new normal is often a better version of themselves. There is a better perspective; what matters, and what doesn't. There is a better appreciation for the richness in life: 'life in high definition', if you will"* (p70). There are helpful example questions that may help cancer patients to notice these perspective-shifts and the ways in which they are continuing to live well even when the progress with treatment may not be going as well as would be ideal.

This book would benefit anyone diagnosed with cancer, their friends and loved ones as well as any medical professionals or support workers working with people who have cancer. The author is British and works in the UK National Health Service, and all references to the UK healthcare systems are well explained to be comprehensible for a global audience. The book aims *"to validate and inspire. And, just possibly, entertain..."* and in all this it succeeds.

[View and order the book from the publisher website](#)

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***Louise Bower-Hatchard** is an IASTI Certified Solution-Focused Practitioner. Louise works full time as a senior manager in Children & Families Services in Sheffield, UK, where she applies solution focused approaches to organisational change, provides formal 1:1 coaching sessions, and trains frontline practitioners in understanding solution-focused approaches to child protection and family wellbeing.*

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