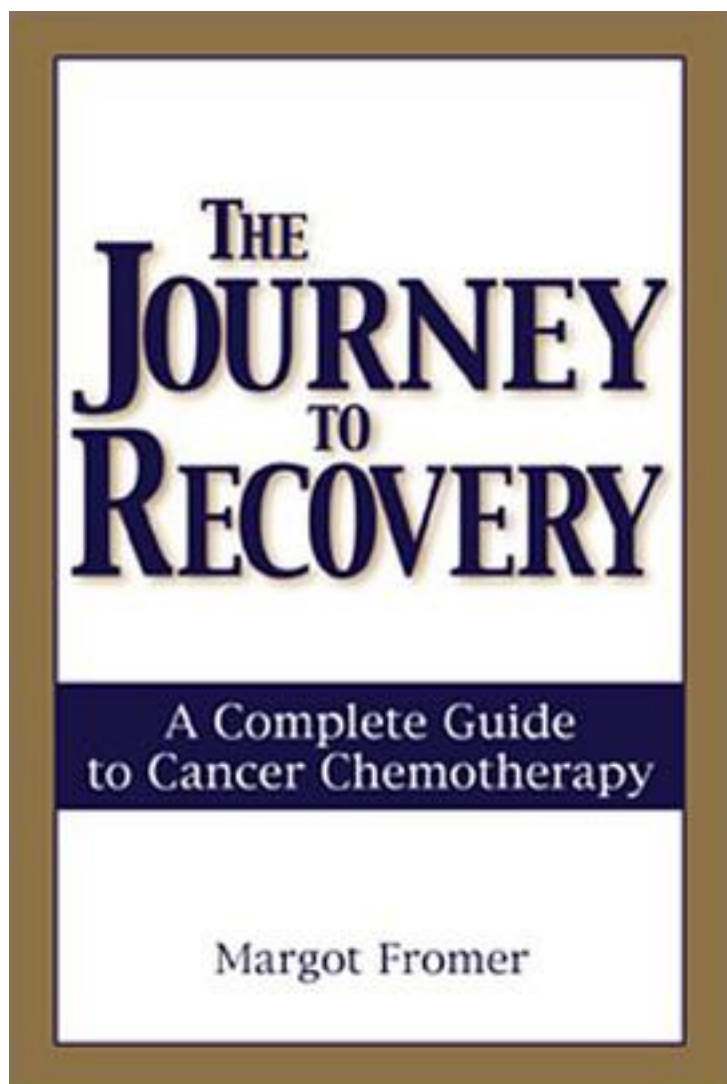


The Journey to Recovery



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Although you may be terribly frightened of even the thought of cancer, it is no longer an automatic death sentence. This is said so often, in fact, that it sounds like a cliché. But the truth is that it's a fact: more people than ever survive cancer and go on to live happy, normal, and productive lives. Almost all of these increases in survival and good health are the result of chemotherapy. Surgery and radiation, the other two major types of cancer treatment, still have a strong place in cancer therapeutics, and they will be discussed briefly in this book. However, it is chemotherapy (the use of drugs and biologics to fight the disease) that has caused cancer to evolve from a hopeless and always fatal group of diseases to what in many cases is a chronic disease that can be controlled and often cured entirely.

In fact, about half of all diagnosed cancers are cured (up from 39 percent in 1973 to 56 percent today), and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimates that more than 8 million Americans alive today have had cancer. More than 300,000 Americans each year can say, "I had cancer, but I don't now." It is highly likely that if you were diagnosed early and began treatment right away, you too will regain your health.

This is not to say that your cancer is definitely curable, because some types of the disease have a much higher cure rate than others, and factors other than the type and amount of treatment affect whether you will survive it. But even if cancer cannot be definitively

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