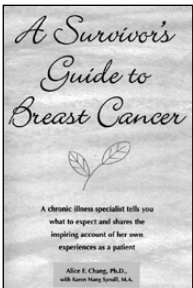


## Healing and growing



*A Survivor's Guide to Breast Cancer*

by Alice F. Chang with Karen Mang Spruill (BA '74, MA '95). New Harbinger Publications, 2000. 173 pages.

Alice Chang has written a deeply personal, candid book, detailing her journey through breast cancer. In her introduction, she writes, "... it is my goal to provide all readers with a clear idea of what to expect and how to cope. ... As a clinical psychologist writing from a personal and professional point of view, I will not be quoting statistics or exploring academic issues ... I will provide practical information to help patients, their families and professionals cope with cancer."

Using language accessible to everyone, Chang (assisted by former FOCUS editor Karen Spruill) is open about complicating factors in her experience such as her Asian-American background, professional background as a clinical psychologist and her status as a single woman. She has had to deal with the myth that Asian-American women do not get breast cancer.

When Chang first started looking for books about breast cancer, she could find none written by Asian-American women. But her background in psychology helped her understand many of her reactions and emotions as she dealt with breast cancer and led her to seek out the counsel-

ing help she needed.

As a single woman, Chang had to deal with loneliness, fears that she was inconveniencing others, and difficulty with applying various creams to areas on her body burnt by radiation treatment.

Chang includes the simple details of her life throughout the book, establishing herself as a fellow human being who deals with a busy schedule, the same hang-ups, intimidating people and situations that we all deal with on a daily basis—yet with the added complication of cancer.

Chang's honesty in dealing with thoughts of death and pain stops readers, causing them to realize how even a highly successful person can feel useless and unsuccessful in the face of a terrifying disease.

Chang emphasizes the importance of supportive relationships by writing about the various relationships she formed and nurtured throughout the process of having breast cancer. She discusses how as a clinical psychologist, she received personal insight into the experiences many of her clients have had.

*A Survivor's Guide to Breast Cancer* is a springboard for tips on how to cope with breast cancer. Throughout the book, Chang includes short side bars containing stories about her experience and information about how cancer affects people. These side bars make it easy for readers to gain valuable encouragement and information quickly.

Chang uses her book to advise

cancer patients about what will help them deal with their illness, carefully describing exercises that need to be done after a mastectomy, reminding people of the need to feel the whole spectrum of emotions and encouraging people to find the activities which help them relax while going through chemotherapy.

Chang sensitively explains what to expect before, during and after a mastectomy, during chemotherapy and during radiation. She explores the mental, social, emotional and physical realities of dealing with these painful treatments. At the end of the book, there is a list of

resources including agencies, organizations, reading material, web sites and patient products.

*A Survivor's Guide to Breast Cancer* is an excellent place to start for anyone who is dealing with cancer or who feels the need to understand the effects and reality of living with cancer. The easy-reading format makes the idea of trying to understand all the treatments and issues involved in fighting cancer, less frightening.

In writing this personal story, Chang and Spruill have provided a valuable resource for cancer patients and their families.



*Supercharged*

by Randy Fishell (BA '83, MDiv '88) Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000. 95 pages.

Randy Fishell has created a book of short, exciting devotionals designed to jump-start kids between the ages of ten and fourteen.

Using a "Power Burst" (Bible verse) as his central point, Fishell tells stories about romance gone wrong, runaway tractors and french fries to explore the meaning of the verse.

Drawing from his experience as the editor of *Guide* magazine, he includes a FACTory item such as this one: "When Absalom got his yearly haircut, his barber would whack off about five pounds of hair. 2 Samuel 14:26." The FACTory item helps illustrate the central point of the day. Each devotional is easy to read and short enough to hold the attention of kids on the go.

Both books reviewed by MYRA NICKS (BS '00), editorial assistant of FOCUS.