

Foreword

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The statistics are alarming. A woman has a one in eight chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime. In 2008, 180,000 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and another 60,000 to 70,000 were diagnosed with noninvasive breast cancer. There were 40,000 deaths reported in just this one year. It is these statistics that are the cause for anxiety every time a woman has a mammogram, a breast exam, or feels something unusual in her breast.

I have been a general surgeon in practice since 1987 and every week I have to tell patients, “Your biopsy shows a breast cancer.” After providing this initial diagnosis, which is often overwhelming, we next discuss treatment options, further tests, prognosis, and recovery. Some forms of treatment encompass a host of medical factors as well as personal choices and perspectives giving the patient an opportunity to process and analyze her options.

Today there are many informative resources and support available that include family, friends, numerous books, and of course, the Internet. Unfortunately, much of the information comes across in a negative manner. Trying to sort through it all can be a daunting task in itself and can cause additional anxiety when trying to make the “right” decision. Patients must realize that there is not just one right decision. They must take into consideration medical and personal factors and make decisions that are best for them.

Martha Lanier gives a very candid and engaging account of her personal experiences from when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer through the details of her journey that followed. The information she provides is clinically informative, while at the same time positive and often humorous. Martha’s content is presented in such a clear and positive manner that it makes the entire discussion and process much less intimidating. In addition, she provides insight and humor on many issues

and nuances from a perspective that patients won't get from a discussion with their surgeon or oncologist.

Martha's book is a great resource for any woman who has been diagnosed with breast cancer or anyone who wants to offer support to a friend or family member who has been diagnosed. Despite all of the information available today, being diagnosed with breast cancer is still overwhelming for many people. Martha gives us an account that is real, refreshing, and positive.