

What's in it for me? Join Nina Riggs on her journey towards death.

How can you continue to live while learning that your life is about to be over?

There is no universal answer to this impossible question. What is meaningful to a person can be meaningless to someone else. However, discovering how a person responds to the approach of death may illuminate the importance of giving priority to what at least one person finds to be worth living, if not one's own priorities.

These flashes are about dealing with deadly diseases. Less than three years later, from the diagnosis of breast cancer to her death, they follow the trajectory of her last years.

The author found out from reading the French philosophy of communication with nature, working from the cuddling to her dog, and working for the memory, feeding the author with a sense of beauty, purpose, and peace. Despite the darkness and uncertainty of the long road ahead, he did what remained of life at a brilliant hour.

Cancer was already an important player in the author's family history, so they had coping mechanisms to backfire.

There are some phone calls you never expected to get. At 37, Nina Riggs took one of these. It was her oncologist, calling her to inform her that she had breast cancer.

The news was devastating, as there would be with any cancer diagnosis, but it was not a complete surprise.

Cancer had already played an important role in Riggs' family. This situation was fully revealed when sitting with a genetic consultant to look after the family tree.

Only a few years ago her mother was diagnosed with cancer and her struggle against the disease came to an end. Her mother had a kind of cancer in their parents' lives, and her mother's sister had an early melanoma - a cancerous cell that did not extend beyond the first layers of skin.

But even more surprising, her grandfather had also breast cancer which is rare in men. On her father's side, a great aunt and aunt had breast cancer as well.

Only 11 percent of cancer diagnoses are definitively associated with genetic reasons, but the prevalence of cancer in Riggs' family certainly suggests that genetics are in play.

Still struggling with the diagnosis, Riggs sought solace in philosophy as her mother had done after her own diagnosis. Her mother read the works of the sixteenth-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne, and he then shattered her articles.

Montaigne previously met death. Her younger brother died at the age of 23; five of her daughters died in the years that followed, and her best friend is the victim.

However, in spite of these losses, Montaigne believed that you should turn yourself into death and accept its inevitability. Thus, it was known that outlaws and looters were traveling in the countryside. His attitude towards death and the way he chose to live his life was a consolation to Riggs.

Nature gave Riggs healing when she was completely devastated.

A cancer diagnosis can change everything in a person's living. After that, when suddenly faced with their deaths, people generally appreciate the people around them more. Time is running out with a sense of urgency.

Riggs experienced a lot of changes. Indeed, after starting chemotherapy, the way she handled the physical world began to change.

It all started the morning after her first chemotherapy. Awakened with a greasy, chemical taste in her mouth. Later on, breakfast couldn't taste coffee or anything she ate. Her tongue went numb. Generally, the simple things that he enjoyed were not suitable for her.

Chemotherapy also affected her thinking. It seemed to take away a distant world of concern at a time that worried about her mind, future, and death, but in the next step, the grass of that time would come back to the present master, focusing on a small detail like a knife. Garden. But then, at the next moment, the focus would return to the future.

Uncomfortable and terrified of these side effects, Riggs seeks comfort and healing in nature.

She headed for nature. At first, the sensations like the smell of wisteria were too big and her heart competed. But she slowly checked his breath and found some kind of peace.

She considered her ancestors, the nineteenth-century poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, and his writings on nature. Emerson believed that nature was as close as we could come to God, but he believed that we should allow nature to fully penetrate our senses and our being to feel it. We had to perceive everything as if we were a huge transparent eyeball.

This concept was later announced by the artist Christopher Pearse Cranch, who drew a picture of this transparent eyeball in the 1830s and made him stand with his long legs and big feet facing the rolling hills.

Riggs experienced this united nature and felt closer to God than ever before. It was an important moment to reconcile with the diagnosis.

Riggs meant to write the will of a cancer diagnosis, and it suddenly felt that her time was coming to an end.

At some point or elsewhere, most people were put off. Sometimes it can be fun. But when you have cancer, it is no longer a desirable option.

After a few weeks of chemotherapy, it's time to write Riggs' request. Couldn't lift anymore. Fortunately, one of her friends was a lawyer who could help her in her role. Apart from the obvious questions about heredity, there were other considerations that forced Riggs to confront the idea of his face of death.

For example, she had to decide what would happen if she reached a stage of illness that she could no longer make up her own decisions. Does it allow artificial humidification and nutrition to be applied if necessary? What to do when her family is unconscious or inadequate?

Finally, she decided that they did not take any measures to extend their life.

The diagnosis of cancer and the reflection of these challenging questions made Riggs feel that time is running out. This sense of urgency turned out to be quite frantic. Rather than rest, she had the urge to do as much as possible, as her husband and doctors advised.

She worked angrily in the garden, planted new trees and plants, dug out new lands, set up a cage to climb plants, and a fireplace. She frequently attended the local garden center while the staff greeted him by name.

Her motivation was almost a form of death challenge to build things with her hands, to nurture life in her garden, and to prepare her for growth into the future. A legacy for her family - something that will exist after she is gone, something they can enjoy in his absence.

Both the result of chemotherapy and the attitude of her doctors broke Riggs's heart.

When you have cancer, the bad news flow may seem infinite. According to Riggs, the flood of misfortune was rather blistered when chemotherapy treatments failed to yield positive results.

At the end of her first round of chemotherapy, Riggs returned to the hospital for a rodent screening. It took a long time for the radiologist to scan the chest tissue, and it was quickly clear to Riggs that the results would not be as expected.

In fact, there was worse news.

Despite chemotherapy, the tumor did not shrink. Rather, enlarged. Worse still, a second tumor appeared close to the first.

Naturally, this was a devastating blow to Riggs. But when she met the surgeon to discuss the scans, he joked that the tumor was growing all the way through it like it was his fault. He also stated that mastectomy - removal of the breast with cancer - and double mastectomy may be necessary. When Riggs was most vulnerable, his style was tough and thoughtless.

The doctor's lack of empathy reminded her of the observation that the philosopher Michel de Montaigne should be allowed to treat only the diseases that they have.

Many doctors have a reputation for poor bedside behavior. The truth is that doctors may be more interested and interested in the scientific aspects of the disease, rather than suffering from the disease itself. This approach can be valuable for a physician to work. However, it is usually harmful to patients.

In order to consolidate Riggs, a nurse told her a story about another doctor working on oncology in the 1970s. This doctor will always recommend a double mastectomy to female breast cancer patients, mechanically and clearly.

He continued to live like this until his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was personally implicated, for him to think twice about his hard-line approach. For the first time, the doctor performed a partial mastectomy.

Riggs knew that her cancer may spread, so she tried to come to terms with her passing.

If the diagnosis of cancer was insufficient, Riggs began her battle against the disease when she lost her mother.

Together, Riggs and her mother returned to literature to evaluate the processes and to address their experiences. In his book *Surgeon*, public health researcher, and author Atul Gawande, they read *Being Mortal* (2015), in which the author uses his experience of watching his father die from a spinal cord tumor to look at how to deal with the final stages of life.

In Gawande's view, when aggressive cancer reaches an advanced stage, the focus is on using the remaining time in a meaningful way, not on treatment.

However, as in life, in death, what makes a person's life meaningful is always unique to the individual. Many people are pleased with the simple pleasures of watching football on television, eating my favorite foods, or spending time with family and friends. Others, like Riggs's memory, can look at a bigger project.

Riggs, despite being busy with writing, was, of course, always aware of the fact that cancer could spread.

To determine whether the spread began, Rigg's doctors injected a blue radioactive dye into their tumors. It was the day before the mastectomy.

The paint crossed Riggs' chest and followed the paths to the most active lymph nodes. If cancer passes through the breast to other parts of the body, the cancerous cells are transported through these lymph nodes.

After the mastectomy, the lymph nodes were removed from the breast and tested for cancer cells.

The results were both good and bad. A few days after the mastectomy, doctors told Riggs that although the lymph nodes were still free of cancerous cells, cancer had not yet spread, and the tumors in the chest continued to grow. He wasn't responding to chemotherapy.

It was not easy to find the right animal, but eventually, the animal became a great comfort for Riggs.

A group of doctors working on a Riggs case had a desperate need for comfort after four rounds of chemotherapy, followed by radiation.

Riggs' partner, John, decided that a dog could help, and started searching online. Your family already had a dog, but it was not a cute or loving creature. A new pet was needed to provide intimacy and care.

The research took the family to the Australian shepherd in a nearby sanctuary. When they brought Blue home, she immediately started licking Riggs' face and changed the whole atmosphere of the house. The dog brought lightness and enthusiasm for life just when the family needed it.

But not everyone was content. The family's other dog, Ellie, an elderly black mutt, wasn't so excited about the new arrival. Ellie cowered and whimpered whenever she saw Blue, whereas Blue barked and bullied Ellie. The relationship was far from coherent.

When things didn't get better between the two dogs, a dog therapist suggested that they bring the newest addition to the family. After a recent play session with Rigg's two children, Blue returned to the shelter.

However, the family did not give up their search. They went to another bunker and took Ellie with them. Together, they found a hairy dog called Benny, wandering happily with the whole family and even waving Ellie's tail.

At home, Riggs embraced her new dog for a long time. He was on his fourth chemotherapy and though he was weak, he was happy.

Riggs survived chemotherapy and radiation for months, but the treatment was not successful.

The beginning of winter and the Christmas holiday period of 2015 did not mark a celebration time and did not rest for Riggs and her family. Rather, there have been other challenges after a tough year.

Approximately 12 months after her initial diagnosis, Riggs was at the end of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. The latter was particularly difficult for her physical well-being and caused the back pain to weaken. Even with pain relievers and muscle relaxants, the pain was too much for her.

Riggs was so weak at this point that she couldn't get out of bed most of the time. I ate in their room and had to use a walker to walk around. She squeezed her back, and the pain was so severe she made her cry.

This experience recalled to her mother's Riggs, whose backbone eventually broke because of numerous tumors attacking him. Shortly after this event, her mother was dead.

Just before Christmas, Riggs completed her last radiation therapy, but soon returned to the hospital, this time in the emergency room.

The young, cheerful doctor who examined her tried to be optimistic at first, explaining that her laboratory values were normal and that she was stable at least in her present condition. However, she admitted that she had an uncomfortable spinal cord fracture and that the MRI scan showed that this was due to a tumor. Cancer spread from her breast to her spine.

The doctor apologized for being too bad at breaking such news and left. Later, the news still stunned Riggs, received visits from nurses and doctors participating in the treatment. They came to say goodbye.

Although the author did not die immediately, from a medical point of view, it was clear that there was nothing more that could be done to save his life.

As cancer spread through her body, Riggs chose to focus on enjoying her final days.

In the summer of 2016, six months after doctors discovered she had metastasized to the backbone of cancer, Riggs was still alive but was aware that his death was near.

At this point, cancer spread further. A new tumor developed in the seventh thoracic vertebrae, as well as the original spinal tumors on the waist, growing and more cancerous cells in the pelvic region.

The treatment of these tumors, especially those on the back, was extremely difficult. The high levels of radiation used to kill cancer cells should never come into contact with any part of the spine, as Riggs had to stand flawlessly during treatments. He wasn't allowed to do even the smallest moves in an hour at a time.

However, radiation therapy was the only palliative - designed to shrink tumors and thus minimize Riggs' pain.

In the autumn of the same year, radiation on the spinal cord tumors was successful enough to allow it to walk again, even with the cane. She was interested in a fun, fashionable fashion accessory, like young woodcutting beards popular with men.

Days after buying a cane, I went with friends to see a Grandmaster Flash concert. She danced for 90 minutes with her crowd, listening to her favorite songs by the hip-hop artist and enjoying these moments.

The next day, she awoke very tiredly, but continued to use much of her time;

Riggs completed her essay in January 2017. Just one month later, at 6:00 am on February 26, she died in a hospital in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The Bright Hour: A Memoir of Living and Dying by Nina Riggs Book Review

The cancer diagnosis is usually the first terrible moment of many people to be followed. However, reconciling your own mortality rate can deepen your relationship with yourself, nature and the environment, and may bring you closer to the most important and meaningful one in your life.

<https://goodbooksummary.com/the-bright-hour-by-nina-riggs-book-summary/>