

# Meditating My Way through Treatment

by Janis L. Silverman, MA

When I learned that I had breast cancer, it felt like a blow to the gut, and to the heart. I was navigating uncharted waters – new doctors, unfamiliar medical terms, so many appointments. It was a lot to digest, but I was determined to remain positive.



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I had been using guided imagery meditation for years before my diagnosis. But when I searched for meditations specific to my thoughts and feelings about breast cancer, I found nothing. So I began writing my own guided imagery meditations, poems, and interfaith prayers. Each day after my radiation treatments, I would write. Any worries I had went straight from

my mind, heart, and soul to the computer. I purposely challenged my negative thoughts and anxieties. I mentally confronted each one head-on by turning those negative ideas into positive ones and then putting them in writing. The

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meditations calmed me, supported me, and reframed my thinking.

Each meditation, poem, and prayer gave me strength and encouragement. Daily writing and meditating became a constant in my newly defined life. They brought me emotional support and a sense of some control.

I also joined a weekly relaxation strategies group. And two years later, I continue to participate in that group. It is so powerful to meditate in a group. The energy seems to bounce off the walls and in between the participants.

I've learned many new relaxation methods from my meditation group. I'm always up for trying new strategies.

When I meditate on my own, I select a meditation method that suits me at that particular moment. It might be breath counting, walking qigong, or guided imagery, whatever I feel will benefit me most that day. Meditation is an integral part of my life, and it always will be. It is an invaluable tool for reducing

stress, prompting relaxation, and mitigating side effects of cancer therapy. It's a practice I recommend to anyone, especially to those facing cancer.

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*Janis Silverman is a breast cancer survivor, author, and retired elementary school, middle school, junior college, and gifted learners teacher living in Charlotte, NC. She has compiled 101 of her poems, prayers, and meditations into a series of four eBooks and audio books entitled Relax, Reflect, Restore, and Recover: Guided Imagery Meditations for Women with Breast Cancer, which are available at amazon.com. You can keep up with Janis at JanisLSilverman.com.*