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# Preface

The idea for this book surfaced one day when I woke up and realized that I didn't need to call anyone that morning about postoperative care for my prostate cancer surgery—not my urologist, nor his physician's assistant, nor his nurse, nor his secretary. The project, the treatment and healing of what in my case was found to be a locally advanced stage of prostate cancer, had become a full-time management job. After considerable reading and asking a multitude of questions, I had concluded that prostate cancer is a very individualized disease. But that morning I had come to the point at which much of the worst seemed to be behind me.

- I had faced down the terror and uncertainty of prostate cancer.
- I had survived the poking, probing, and cutting.
- I had now healed, for the most part.

In the days following, I gathered together my thoughts and recollections and began to reflect on the countless decisions, the ups and downs. I recalled the anxiousness as well as the feelings of celebration that had been experienced over the previous year.

I felt as though I had been reborn. Nothing looked the same. Nothing sounded the same. Nothing felt the same. Everything now had an aura of beauty surrounding it.

I knew some period of healing still lay ahead of me. So setting about to see these feelings take the form of words, a character at a time, on my word processor seemed cathartic. As the writing project took shape from recall to notes to sentences, it soon proved stimulating, educational, and, I hoped, a service to other men and their families.

I want to acknowledge many for their help. First, Dr. Michael Wehle at the Mayo Clinic Jacksonville, whose review of an early manuscript draft helped improve technical accuracy. His early encouragement and the apparent need to present the patient's point of view became my central mission. Next, several members of the senior staff at Mayo Clinic carefully read the manuscript, which led in turn to Dr. Wehle's contributing the Afterword to this book. My colleague and co-author on another book project, Dr. Leon Lessinger, Eminent Scholar in Education Policy and Economic Development, provided significant support during my healing. He provided the intellectu-

al underpinning for Chapter 8, Medical Coaching and Collaboration, in which the health providers—physician, nurse, physician assistant, technician, and aide—join the patient in viewing collaborative activity as an effective partnership in healing.

A note of thanks to Frank Schnidman, Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Miami, who helped guide me through my earliest introduction to “surfing the Net.” Those early Internet days were tedious and awkward, with searches undertaken without the benefit of today’s more advanced and powerful search engines. He provided guidance, personal help, and strong cautions. I soon met other prostate cancer patients on-line who, in a good-hearted manner, dispensed first-hand (although sometimes unsubstantiated) advice. Frank is a founder of the American Center for Patient Decision Making, located at <http://www.decision.org> on the Internet.

A special word of thanks goes to Karen Berger, President and Publisher of Quality Medical Publishing. Karen immediately recognized the importance of this book from her personal experience in writing her own book, *A Woman’s Decision*, for breast cancer patients, and she agreed to publish my book and direct its distribution to bookstores nationwide. My editor, Suzanne Wakefield, helped focus my writing on those topics that could eventually prove most useful to the broadest audience. From her personal interest, Suzanne urged expansion of Chapter 10, For the Woman Who Cares, and fostered several reference topics that add measurably to the book’s practicality.

Finally, warm appreciation to Steven Wilson, Senior Publicist for Borders’ Philadelphia bookstore. As an accomplished writer and former book editor, Steve’s earliest draft review and insightful suggestions provided me with the necessary guidance to make this a more readable story.

These persons helped make this a more successful writing project. For that they deserve much of the credit for its strength. However, the reader should in no way hold anyone other than the author accountable for any weaknesses in the final product.

Allen E. Salowe