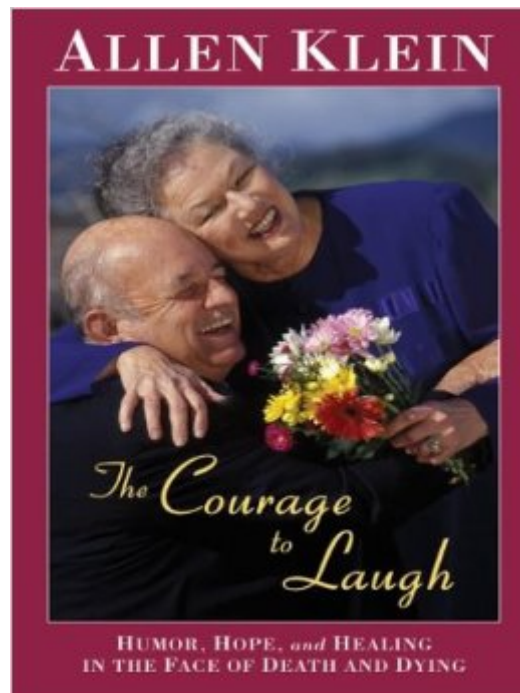


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# The Courage To Laugh: Humor, Hope, And Healing In The Face Of Death And Dying



## Synopsis

Illustrating the natural importance of laughter, Allen shows readers how to face the end of life and the grieving process with dignity and compassion. Filled with insight, heartwarming stories, and anecdotes from patients, doctors, nurses, children, and comedians, *The Courage to Laugh* is a lifesaving tool that helps rekindle the human spirit of both the people experiencing a serious illness and the loved ones who care for them. Available only in Senior Lifestyles 4.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I purchased this book and read it after the deaths of three immediate family members (son, father, mother-in-law) occurred within a year's time. I reached a point wherein I asked myself, "How have I been able to cope with all the stress this year, and why am I coming unglued now?" The answer is in the title of the book. What helped me throughout the year was my wit. I realized that I needed to nurture my sense of humor as much as I needed food, clothing, shelter, love and prayer. Through Allen Klein's book I discovered that, in the face of trauma, humor is as much a saving grace as are spiritual/religious beliefs. I heartily recommend this book for anyone who is facing a terminal illness or who has a loved one who has a terminal illness, as well as for those who are at least a year past the death of their loved one (unless they have an extremely accessible wit). Laughter is excellent medicine. Buy this book, but then remember to take the medicine! Laughing in the face of death, or finding light when one feels that life is dark, is a challenging task. It takes courage to search thoroughly and find humor's rainbow behind the dark clouds of grief.

It has been years since my parents died and I am very fortunate that no-one I am close to is seriously ill, so I really didn't have a reason to read this book, but I was intrigued by the title. This is a wonderful book! It gives so much to the reader. It expands your heart and I found it giving me a certain feeling of grace - not that I have been spared - but a feeling of grace from reading about the wonderful people in this book. Yes, it's full of wonderful, noble people, but these people are also blessed with a sense of humor and class. I don't know if it would help someone who has never had a sense of humor, but I am positive that it would help anyone who has laughed at least once in their life. Mr. Klein's approach is not condescending or "let's laugh at the victim" style at all. It is warm and joyous and a blessing to anyone who reads it. This book will not bring you down! It may open a path of communication for you. I cannot say enough about this book. Although I have no life threatening disease, I have suffered through horrible bouts of depression and this book was a God-send because it made me LAUGH! I am looking forward to reading his other books!

Much of our popular culture defines heroism as laughing in the face of death. Square-jawed heroes and voluptuous heroines in books and movies show us what they're made of as they make light of their impending demise. Allen Klein writes about heroes, death, and laughter, too. Klein's heroes aren't cartoon characters, they're ordinary people. They are you and me. Klein's heroes haven't been chained in the path of an onrushing train. They're teathered to an IV during chemo-therapy or living with a chronic condition that won't kill them but just make life more difficult as time goes by. Klein's heroes have one thing in common; their ability to laugh at themselves and their situations. They've also given others The gift of laughing with them. Allen Klein has done a remarkable thing. Rather than celebrate heroism by elevating it out of our grasp, he celebrates it by bringing it to a level where its accessible to all of us. Klein's heroism is facing our time here with dignity, optimism, and a sense of humor in spite of an uncertain future. That's living. That's dying. That's the point.

Years ago, I learned about the work of Norman Cousins, then editor of "The Saturday Review." My late father was a real fan of that magazine and told me about Cousin's then radical ideas about how humor could help healing. His work is covered in his 1979 book, *Anatomy of an Illness* (Norton). Since then, I've had an interest in humor and how it helps us cope with the trials and tribulations of life. Allen Klein has taken the concept a step further, exploring in great detail how humor helps us cope with death. As I began the book, I read about Klein's experience with the death of his father. Thoughts of my father's death came creeping into my consciousness. Do I want to read this book? I continued reading, and I'm glad I did. This book is a fascinating sociological study of humor and

death. It's very well done, so well that the book could qualify as a college textbook as well as a very interesting read . . . and even a valuable guidebook for people working in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, or caring for a loved one. The organization of *The Courage to Laugh* was obvious, and made the book easier to read, understand, and absorb. Part I answers the question, "Is Death Too Serious for Humor?" with four strong background chapters. The second part of the book, *Seeing Demise Thru Humorous Eyes*, is filled with an amazing collection of wit and understanding from a wide variety of sources. I became so engaged with this material, that I couldn't put the book down. I just kept reading! I also enjoyed the last part of the book, *Leave' Em Laughing*, that looks at the subject through the eyes of those who are dying. Highly recommended for anyone dealing with death and dying or studying the topic. If you're a student of humor, this book is a treasure.

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