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50 Spiritual Classics

EDITED BY ELIZABETH WHITTINGTON

For most people, a diagnosis of cancer brings with it a plethora of books from friends and family— books meant to help us understand the bomb that just exploded in our lives.

But the books stack up on the bedside table, overwhelming in their complexity and requiring a level of concentration we cannot maintain. We need to understand the philosophers whose wisdom fills the pages, but the stress of surgery, chemo, and the entire cancer milieu has shortened our attention span to the length of a short story compared with the novel we could once devour in a few days.

To the rescue comes *50 Spiritual Classics*, the condensed version of 50 books by spiritual leaders and philosophers representing writing from a wide range of people beginning with St. Augustine in A.D. 400 to recent works such as *The Purpose Driven Life* in 2003.

Tom Butler-Bowdon doesn't pretend to give the final word on any of the books, all of which have been analyzed by experts. Rather, Butler-Bowdon, a graduate of the London School of Economics who has his own self-development website, wants to help those who need a primer on these issues that will lead to further study.

OK, some may call it cheating your way to understanding the philosophy of life, but when you've just been diagnosed with cancer and feel like you no longer understand life or your place in it, there's a need to identify quickly what helps and what doesn't, and which books you might want to expend the energy to read. This book gives it to you in a nutshell and gets to the point about each of these books quickly. It is cheating a little, but we deserve it.