

New Book Information

Category:

Memoir,
Autobiography,
Health/Coping with
illness.

**Age range/
readership:**

20-40 something's
UK and USA, read
ME information
books on
management/coping
strategies and
success stories. Also
health professionals
as well as general
public that read
inspirational
memoirs/real life
stories of
overcoming
adversity.
Lesbian/gay interest.
Like humorous
upbeat narrative.

Market data:

250,000 people in
UK(Afme.org.uk) & 1
million in USA have
ME. (Kidshealth.org)
More than 25 million
Americans suffer
from fatigue related
illnesses (Teitelbaum
'From Fatigue To
Fantastic')
Autobiographies &
memoirs account for
5-7% of TCM sales
(Nielson Bookscan)

**SUGGESTED
SPECIFICATION**

Format:
20x13cm

Extent:
304 pages

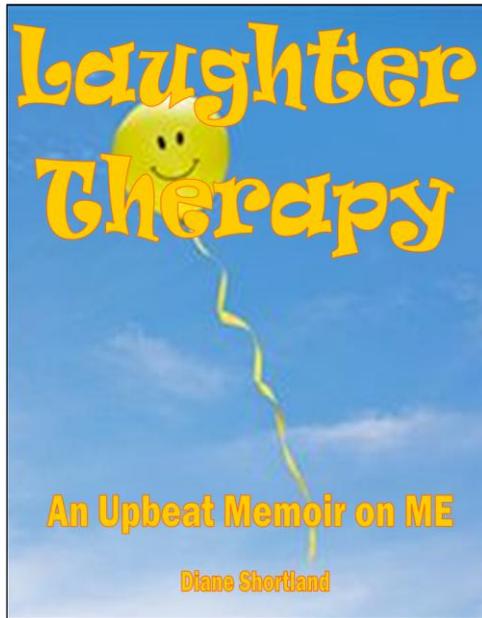
Binding:
Paper Back

Illustrations:
Not illustrated at
Present.

Words:
Running text with 28
chapters plus
introduction &
index.

Publication date:
Not set

Price:
£7.99 suggestion



LAUGHTER THERAPY

An upbeat memoir on ME

Diane Shortland

The only humorous book on living with the illness ME (also known as CFS).

A memoir minus the misery.

Accessible & entertaining, taking the reader on an enjoyable journey through recovery & self discovery.

Gives insider insight into surviving long term illness.

The author has lived with ME for 13 years.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Diane is a vivacious 22 year old living an idealistic life of work, clubbing and girlie shopping trips. But when ME strikes overnight and she is transported to another world, bedridden by pain, dizziness and fatigue, she must reach for humour to survive and overcome this debilitating illness in order to regain her quality of life. The prospective niche market for this memoir is large with 250,000 (UK) - one million (US) sufferers plus friends of ME) but its content of overcoming adversity/journey of self discovery is relevant to a much wider audience. It describes a journey of gradual progression back to better health spanning over a decade. It's a tale of how laughter and optimism, determination and perseverance can get you through anything. With a story arch of friendship and discovering who you are, it also delves into the issues surrounding lifestyle choices and personal identity.

Structured around the balanced outlook of work, rest and play, and with an unfailingly upbeat narrator, it uses laugh out loud observation to uncover a personal yet universal experience of surviving, growing and developing in the toughest of circumstances. There is no currently published material on ME written from a purely humorous angle, or that has a universally appealing story arch. This book reflects real living and real growth, and provides invaluable insight into a greatly misunderstood illness.

UK COMPETITION: *Verity Red's Diary: a story of surviving M.E.* (2005) Janus. ASR: 162,699.

Semiautobiographical narrative of a year in the life of an ME sufferer. Addresses day to day living but from a defeated and depressed viewpoint that Amazon reviewers felt was "neither entertaining nor touching". *The State of Me* (2008) The Friday Project. ASR: 52,117. A fictionalised memoir focusing on a decade of suffering from ME. Reviewers welcomed the presence of a sense of humour and enjoyed the observations about human behaviour, but it was criticised for lacking narrative drive and plot. *The C-Word* (2010) Arrow. ASR 14,889. An honest and humorous account of battling breast cancer; a witty and emotional read that has been welcomed for its "insightful and uplifting slice of real life".

US COMPETITION: *Recovery from CFS* (2008) Author House. ASR 153,130. A collection of success stories that reviewers warmed to because it "didn't try to tell you what to do; it was simply testimonies from people who have been in the trenches and found a way out". *My Life, deleted* (2011) Harper One ASR 1,316. A memoir on memory loss that focuses on relationships and "the possibility of finding extraordinary opportunity in life's greatest challenges". Whilst these books show that personal stories of positivity/success in overcoming illness/adversity are welcomed, there are no memoirs published in the US that reflect a humorous narrative voice.

THE AUTHOR: With 13 years firsthand experience of living with ME, I have true empathy and a passionate interest in the issues surrounding long term illness. My Psychology background has aided my study of behaviour. A columnist for Assoc. Of Young People with M.E. for 5 years, my writing was commended by the CEO of AYME, included in handouts to student nurses and added as links to websites run by sufferers (e.g. www.SurvivingSevereME.co.uk). My website contains many testimonials from sufferers themselves who find my prose and its approachable style invaluable in educating those around them to understand the trials their illness puts them through. I am studying for an MA in Prof. Writing. I write for Action for ME's magazine 'Interaction' and have an established & successful blog on ME.

Diane Shortland

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