

Two Steps Forward: Embracing Life with a Brain Tumor

by

Claire Snyman

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Synopsis

Friday morning, 14 May 2010, Claire Snyman opens her eyes to find the room spinning around her, the light fixture dancing above. Then she develops her first migraine ever. What is this about? She must just be overdoing it at work. As a busy marketing executive with a husband and young son, Claire is used to pushing her limits. But it's not too much work: it's a rare non-malignant brain tumor. The diagnosis completely blindsides 34-year-old Claire and her family. Together they face the new reality of her condition while trying to navigate conflicting medical advice and cope with her new onset of symptoms. *Two Steps Forward* opens the door on life with a brain tumor and life after brain surgery: the frustrations, challenges and successes. A brain tumor touches not only the person with the tumor, but also their loved ones. In this compelling book, Claire documents her personal awakening as she learns to be her body's own advocate through the often-harrowing journey of life with a brain tumor, her misdiagnosis and the brain surgery and recovery that followed. As she slowly recovers, she comes to realize that life's small delights are just as important to embrace, be grateful for and believe in. This inspirational story is told with honesty, clarity and revelation. *Two Steps Forward* is an enlightening and compelling book for readers walking a similar path, but also for those facing a life-changing situation or for anyone looking for a positive and uplifting story.

What people say about this book

ACE340, "If you are reading this.....you need this book.... If you are reading this, chances are you or a loved one have been diagnosed with a brain tumor. You need this book.If you have been diagnosed with a brain tumor and are feeling overwhelmed or having trouble understanding how you feel, you need this book. I underwent emergency brain surgery 10/2020, and while I had tons of support from family and friends, I felt very alone in my recovery because I didn't feel like anyone truly understood what I was going through. But Claire Synman definitely does. There were times that I got teary eyed reading this book because Claire Synman would articulate feelings that I thought were crazy or I could not explain. (Like the overwhelming visual stimulation the first time I tried to grocery shop making me feel like I got drunk before I entered the store.) I also was becoming frustrated, that while intentions were good, because I looked normal, people would say I was "doing great" when in fact I felt like hell. I found comfort in reading in this book that this is a common frustration after brain surgery. This book brought me tremendous relief and understanding that I was not alone in my recovery process. There are so many other positive points in this book, but everyone's journey is different, and I am positive you will find your own ways to relate to Claire Synman's path.If your loved one has been diagnosed with a brain tumor and you are not sure how to best understand and support them, you need this book. The minute I finished this, I handed it to my dad and said "please read this book because I need someone to understand what I am going through," He breezed through it in 2 days and when he was finished, he said to me "Why didn't you tell me you were still dealing with so much internally?" The truth was, I was having a hard time explaining how I felt to my family, but Claire Synman's story spoke it for me. Since my dad finished the book, we have had several discussions in relation to mine and Claire's recovery. My dad now understands that I need more than being told I am "doing great". I need the understanding that just because I look "fine" doesn't mean I feel fine. I need understanding that normal situations may feel overwhelming to me now or that simple tasks may lead me to feel easily fatigued. I now feel I can talk to my dad easily about what I am feeling and he understands my recovery and how to support me better now.I am so grateful I found this book, not only for myself but for my loved ones. Incidents of depression are very high after brain surgery. I found myself going down that path because I mentally felt very alone and misunderstood in my recovery. Reading Claire Synman's memoir pulled me off that track because I no longer feel alone in my journey.You need this book. And Good Luck with your brain adventure "

Long time user, "Important information. I'm about to have a craniotomy next month and have been searching for recovery stories. This is a good one. She talks about advocating for herself and all the different symptoms after the surgery. My brain tumor it different and I'm a lot older so I won't have the same experiences. But I think her being blindsided by symptoms and having to find the answers why it was happening was a good example of what to expect by

others.”

Peter Heisler, “I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Two Steps Forward*. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Two Steps Forward*. As an individual who had the same type of rare brain tumor that Ms. Snyman had I was interested in comparing my own experiences to hers. The book confirmed for me that everyone's experience with a brain tumor is different. Everyone's family and friends also respond differently. After the long healing process, after the scars are gone, sometimes people forget what you went through or they think that since the tumor or cyst has been removed, that you are back to "normal". Unfortunately all too often, that is not the case. Ms. Snyman's book also illustrates how having a rare condition may lead to misdiagnosis. I highly recommend anyone who has/have a brain tumor or cyst or knows someone who has read this book. They will better understand what that person went through and is still going through even after the tumor has been removed. Any illness or injury concerning the brain are among the most misunderstood conditions among friends and relatives. I believe that reading Ms. Snyman's book will give people a better understanding of what is involved in having a tumor, having it surgically removed, and in the healing and recovery period.”

Ebook Tops Reader, “I am amazed that Claire Snyman could write a book about an I am amazed that Claire Snyman could write a book about an experience not unlike my own.. I would not wish this on anyone but it's refreshing to know that I'm not alone in this fight with a tumor that so many healthcare professionals, including family physicians, neurosurgeons and neurologists tend to brush off as insignificant. I am forever grateful to our friend in our amazing group that could put into words exactly what I could not. For those, like me, who still get frustrated that no doctor listens (and even laughs at you) don't give up. The struggle to be believed is real and someone out there will listen. Perseverance will get you the care you need and *Two Steps Forward* shows that by example. I hope that because of *Two Steps Forward* and Claire Snyman, more people who struggle with a diagnosis, treatment and recovery are able to find their way to our group and find the support they and their families so desperately need and are looking for.”

Kelly, “Immensely Helpful. This was such an informative and relevant read. I am thankful for Claire's firsthand account of her journey. I feel more knowledgeable about what lies ahead!”

Kirsten van der Nest, “Honest and uplifting. Claire Snyman's book isn't only for people looking for a real account on brain tumours but for each of us who need to be reminded of the importance of resilience and the power of positive thought and action. Well worth the read.”

Mouse, “Wonderful, insightful read. I purchased this book not as a brain injury or tumour survivor, but as someone interested in Claire's perspective on life after her trauma. It was a beautifully told account of her survival and subsequent positive view on how fragile life is and therefore every minute should be treasured. I highly recommend this book to anyone suffering

from (or anyone who knows someone suffering from) a brain illness or injury for its advice on how to fight your own corner. I also recommend this to anyone who has struggled with any difficulty in life as I think you could gain valuable advice on how to overcome many obstacles.”

RAT, “Excellent first book! Hope there are more to follow.... A really good read. Well written and very descriptive as to what Claire was feeling over a difficult 3 year period. With my father recently having had brain surgery I had a far greater understanding and empathy for what he was feeling at the time. Highly recommended for medical practitioners (with its handy tips and thoughts), those undergoing or with family/friends undergoing any major surgery, but even just for the casual reader, its gripping in parts, uplifting in others. I look forward to Claire's next book as she certainly has the talent to tell a story.”

TIPTOES, “family and good friends so much can be achieved. An inspirational read about a heroic woman on her journey of recovery from brain surgery. With a supportive husband, family and good friends so much can be achieved. I read this story from a non brain trauma perspective. I found the book an incredibly potent read. The brain is an amazingly robust and powerful organ and Claire shows us this in her remarkable recovery. Claire also shows us that you need to know your own body and to be your own advocate if you think something is wrong. Claire teaches us patience , mindfulness and above all to be compassionate to ourselves, a perfect combination to being a beautiful person , just as she is.”

Lizzie61, “Interesting Read.. Read this book, following surgery for exactly the same type of brain tumour, during recovery. Sums up exactly the physical and emotional feelings experienced. A must read for anyone, or their family who has this type of tumour diagnosed, removed or on watch and wait. Brilliantly written.”

K. Clark, “loved one, or suffering from a serious illness yourself. As a Colloid Cyst Survivor myself i could relate to many of the things Claire has gone through in her journey of recovery. She put her experiences very eloquently and this is a very helpful book if you are carer, loved one, or suffering from a serious illness yourself. Not only a good read, but very informative.”

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