



Chasing Hope: A Patient's Deep Dive into Stem Cells, Faith, and the Future

Richard M. Cohen

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After more than four decades living with multiple sclerosis, *New York Times* bestselling author Richard M. Cohen finds a flicker of hope in a groundbreaking medical procedure.

Richard Cohen struggles with failing limbs and is legally blind. He has survived two bouts of colon cancer and a life-threatening blood clot in his lungs. After enduring decades of harsh treatments and invasive therapies, Cohen decided to trade in his life as a patient.

In 2012, Cohen and his wife, Meredith Vieira, were invited to host and chair an adult stem cell conference at the Vatican. Scientists would be gathering in Rome to discuss stem cell therapy for autoimmune diseases, including MS. A believer in the power of denial and determination over faith and hope, Cohen was caught off guard by what he learned. Medical technology had advanced further and more quickly than Cohen had known. Could there be a chance his health could improve? Could MS be cured? As Cohen took part in a pioneering stem cell protocol, he opened himself to the possibility of hope for the first time in his adult life.

Cohen's deep dive into the cutting-edge world of stem cell research and his journalistic investigation of hope includes interviews with doctors, scientists, and religious leaders, as well as conversations with others living with chronic conditions, all with the goal of understanding a hope that is both elusive and alluring.

As drily funny as it is emotionally vulnerable, *Chasing Hope* navigates the fascinating and ever-changing intersection between illness and hope.

Chasing Hope: A Patient's Deep Dive into Stem Cells, Faith, and the Future Details

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From Reader Review Chasing Hope: A Patient's Deep Dive into Stem Cells, Faith, and the Future for online ebook

Riley Jason says

Holding Out For Hope

I know I'm not alone, and that is helpful. I am at least a one man cheering section for the success of stem cell treatments to succeed. Richard Cohen keeps me drawn to the next chapter and the next chapter in his almost impossible journey. The way he tells his story draws me into the enormity of his struggles, the relentless, necessary pursuit of a cure, not only for himself, but even more so for his remarkable adult children and ultimately anyone who contracts multiple sclerosis.

Hope says

Richard Cohen's story of his progress (or lack thereof) with multiple sclerosis over 40 years and a last ditch effort to try stem cell therapy. Because my son has MS, I was very interested.

Leslie says

As a person with a chronic health condition I just couldn't relate to his journey. It's so different than mine. I've never looked toward "people of faith" to give me courage to live my life more fully. I've looked at how I can make myself the healthiest person -- diet, exercise, attitude -- in spite of having a progressive condition. He talks with a lot of men -- doctors, preachers, patients -- which didn't have inspiring stories...for me. But, I suppose his journey resonates for others.

Pilar A Tarry says

Excellent book! Thought provoking about the role that Hope plays in our life!

This book really touched me. Inspiring read about how hope helps us through this journey of life. Highly recommend this book.

Jackie says

Hope

MS and I are like unwelcome roommates, neither of us have the option of moving out of this body we share.

Andrew Scholes says

There was a lot he talked about regarding his life with Multiple Sclerosis that I could relate to. I want to go back and find those passages and highlight them.

Jane E Sheridan says

Hope not hopelessness

This book touched me so much. My circle of hope includes two friends with MS. I've read other books by Richard Cohen, as well as his blog. He makes me laugh and cry, often at the same time.

I found the entire book to be a great read. But what struck me the most was the section about hopelessness. Prolonged hopelessness can have profound negative health consequences and can even lead to death.

I have friends who seem to be overwhelmed by our current political situation. Fear and hopelessness go hand in hand. I've talked with them about how I can no longer watch much news as it makes me physically ill. While I am "chasing hope" for a better world, it's important for me to avoid fear and negativity.

I admire Richard and Meredith, as well as their children, for putting their lives out there for us to learn. Thank you.

Heather Harris says

This book was a dive into a world I'm thankful to not have intimate knowledge in - the world of chronic disease. It is almost a memoir of Richard Cohen's experience of living for decades with MS, how his experiences shaped some of his life, and potential options for treatment. Overall, the book talked about his lack of hope in his early years, which actually stemmed from some of his conversations with his doctors.

Chasing Hope dove into different situations where people may have hope unexpectedly or seem to have lost hope. It helped me to revisit my feelings of hope in the world, even though I don't have to deal with chronic illness. It gives a lot of different perspective and insight into the world of living with MS.

Melissa says

Explore hope's history with a heavy dose of what it's like to live with chronic disease

An enjoyable read that is more about hope and its history than it is about medical research (or certainly stem cells), this book will definitely give you a good idea of what living with chronic illness is like. There are good, solid facts about the clinical trial process. Stem cells and the status of stem cell research are not served particularly well by this book. The conversations on the exploration of "hope" with several interesting people

that are part of the author's life or people he sought, and are from various religions, backgrounds and work lives, are fascinating and, in the aggregate, are an excellent study of this subject. The author's sometimes brutal honesty about his experience suffering for years with chronic illness, along with some very moving passages about communication with his family about how the disease was present in and affected their lives, bring emotional heft to the book.

Michael Roman says

Good read. Very much a personal journey story, but engaging.

BOOKLOVER10 says

Richard Cohen was diagnosed with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis in 1973, when he was in his mid-twenties, but continued working as a journalist as long as he could. Before he contracted MS, Cohen was an energetic man who enjoyed vigorous physical exercise and took vacations to far-flung places. As time passed, his gait became unsteady, he had two bouts with colon cancer, and he became legally blind. Through it all, his wife, Meredith Viera, and their three children were a strong source of support.

In "Chasing Hope," Cohen reveals how having MS affected him and his family. At times, Cohen admits, he was moody, argumentative, angry, and frustrated. He does not rely on a higher power to whom he can pray for salvation, but would be grateful if there were a viable treatment to ease his symptoms. He has no expectations of a cure, but has undergone experimental stem cell therapy. Cohen continues to write, but he feels diminished. "I am a different person from the one I used to know," he says.

The author addresses the subjects of hope and faith at great length. If there is no rational reason to expect an improvement in one's circumstances, why should one believe that things will get better? To address this conundrum, he talks with proponents of various religions; physicians and researchers; and others coping with debilitating disorders, but he reaches no firm conclusions. Lee Woodruff, whose husband, Bob, suffered a traumatic brain injury in Iraq, maintains that "despair is crippling" and "moving forward is the only choice we have if we want to grapple with our new realities." In addition, Cohen urges medical practitioners to temper honesty about their patients' prognoses with compassion. The mind and body are connected, and a physician's encouragement may drive us to keep fighting, even when the outcome seems bleak. Although Cohen breaks little new ground in "Chasing Hope," and his prose rambles at times, this cathartic book may resonate with people and their caregivers who deal with the pain and indignity of chronic illness on a daily basis.
