



**Nancy Hopps**

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## Press/Media Room/Articles About Nancy

### **Voice of healing comes through**

By Karen McCowan

The Register-Guard

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Nancy Hopps didn't set out to become an expert on coaching others through cancer treatment.

"But everybody has their gifts, and this is one of mine," she said. "I know how to do this."

That know-how was hard won.

Hopps survived her own uterine cancer, diagnosed in 1998. She helped care for her son's fiancée, who died in 1999 from a recurrence of childhood kidney cancer. And she supported her then 19-year-old daughter through surgery, chemotherapy and radiation treatment after her Hodgkin's lymphoma was diagnosed in February 2005.

The resulting wisdom was "a gift I never would have wished for," said Hopps, 52.

But it has led her to record a series of **Relax into Healing** CDs, which she says are helping her business grow significantly. The CDs are designed to prepare listeners for, and lead them through, cancer, surgery, pain, chemotherapy, radiation treatment.

The idea came from her daughter, whom Hopps cared for full-time after her February 2005 lymphoma diagnosis. Now in remission, daughter Annamioka has returned to her pre-med and fine arts studies at the University of Oregon. She hopes to become a naturopathic physician.

"Mieka would say, 'What do people do that don't have somebody like you to help them, somebody to hold their hand who's not more scared than they are?' " Hopps recalled.

Her cancer CDs reflect her eclectic array of life experiences.

She was first exposed to the mind-body-spirit connections they employ as a philosophy student at Ohio Wesleyan University. Later, she led relaxation and affirmation classes at Lane Community College and the University of Oregon.

She began honing her recording skills in 1988, when she recorded her first relaxation cassette "using a hand-held Radio Shack microphone." She went on to create a series, selling an estimated 15,000 tapes and CDs.

Hopps has now invested more than \$45,000 in the new cancer CDs, which also include techniques developed in her one-on-one healing work with clients at her massage and hypnotherapy studio southwest of Eugene.

They also draw on her work as a local actor, including roles as a feisty, physical Kate in Lord Leebrick Theater's "Taming of the Shrew" and a Sumerian goddess in Eugene Chamber Theater's "Descent of Inanna."

She initially planned to record only one CD to help people confront cancer. After working with a focus group of local cancer patients and those who treat them, however, she decided she had more than eight hours of important material.

The result was a two-CD set, ***Cancer: Embracing the Healing Journey*** along with individual CDs specifically for chemotherapy and radiation. She also recorded CDs on surgery and pain management, and one composed of "healing affirmations."

Dr. Jan Stafl, a Eugene obstetrician and gynecologist who diagnosed Hopps' cancer, provides an introduction to each recording.

"I believe in her work strongly," said Stafl, who also serves on the board of the American Holistic Medical Association. He first saw the power of her relaxation techniques when Hopps elected not to have general anesthesia for own cancer surgery, he said.

"It was the first time I had ever seen that," Stafl said. "She healed amazingly well, and when she told me how she did this, I was impressed with how calming and self-soothing this can be."

Stafl said he now keeps Hopps' entire series on hand for use with his patients.

Dr. Julie Gemmel, a radiation oncologist at the Willamette Valley Cancer Center, helped Hopps ensure that "Radiation: Removing the Dross" meshed with the medical aspects of that treatment.

"She does a fabulous job of preparing patients for what will happen here and of equipping them with relaxing images and coping skills," Gemmel said.

Such tools "absolutely" make a difference in helping patients get the most from treatment, she said.

"People come in with a lot of fear - fear of the unknown, fear of pain, just being afraid because they have cancer," she said. "I've seen sort of general meditation tapes before, but I haven't seen a product before that prepared people particularly for radiation."

Eugene resident Lisa Rosen takes "Chemotherapy: A Healing Solution" along each time she receives chemotherapy for breast cancer. "It's an ally, someone talking you through exactly what you're experiencing in a positive way," she said.

Hopps' voice, honed in her theater experience, is a key to the CDs' effectiveness, said Pleasant Hill resident James Aday. He used her "Surgery: Mindful Mending" during and after two knee replacements.

"Nancy has a resonant voice," he said. "It's pleasant and soft, but there's a depth to it, and it also has sincerity." An authority comes through, he said, because "she's talking about experiences that she's had."

Hopps said a higher power nudged her to begin recording a cancer CD one night during Mieka's recovery. Her daughter had applied for a grant from the Sumasil Foundation so she could pursue her interest in medicinal herbs, and asked Hopps to proofread her application hours before it was due. Reading details of the all-woman grant program, Hopps said, "Geez - I wish I'd known about this so I could write one." To which her daughter replied: "Well, write one."

Hopps wrote the essay in an hour, making "educated guesses" on a project budget based on her previous CDs. She was flabbergasted to receive a \$3,000 grant along with her daughter, whose drawings illustrate booklets that accompany the recordings.

Since then, the project has "just taken off," Hopps said.

She shipped her first 1,000 copies of the cancer CDs to four national distributors in October.

While she has yet to compile her 2006 earnings, Hopps said, a recent payment from one of four national distributors showed that the cancer series quadrupled her sales for November and December "without any kind of promotion."

And she launched a national tour last week, with a reading and signing at Eugene Borders, followed by appearances in Tucson, Portland and Denver.

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## **RELAX INTO HEALING**

Local cancer survivor Nancy Hopps' CDs talk others through treatment:

*Cancer: Embracing the Healing Journey, Chemotherapy: A Healing Solution, Radiation: Removing the Dross, Surgery: Mindful Mending, Pain: Softening the Sensations, Healing Affirmations & Harp.*

Available: Local bookstores, **[www.relaxintohealing.com](http://www.relaxintohealing.com)**.