

# LEAVES FALLING GENTLY

Living Fully with Serious & Life-Limiting Illness Through Mindfulness, Compassion & Connectedness

SUSAN BAUER-WU, PHD, RN

FOREWORD BY JOAN HALIFAX, PHD

## Praise

“A friendly introduction to a way of being that can literally and metaphorically give your life back to you.”

— John Kabat-Zinn, PhD,  
Founder of Mindfulness-  
Based Stress Reduction

“A powerful book! Susan Bauer-Wu has attacked the problems of life and death. Her book gives concrete solutions to patients and loved ones who need advice. It is a cookbook for the living who may be dying. A must read.”

— Zorba Paster, MD, PRI-  
Public Radio International,  
*On Your Health*

Millions of people diagnosed with serious and life threatening illnesses are often troubled by fears, worries, a sense of loss, and an overwhelming sense that there is still much more left to do. Written by a nurse, clinical scientist, and meditation practitioner with nearly thirty years of experience working with people from different faith traditions who have serious illnesses, *Leaves Falling Gently* shows how the cultivation of mindfulness and compassion can help these individuals to live fully, regardless of circumstances, with peace of mind, contentment, and connection with loved ones and with what matters most.

*Leaves Falling Gently* is about living well despite changes and challenges beyond your control. It teaches readers how they can change the internal experience of coming to terms with their situation, if not the external reality of their condition, through mindfulness and compassion. Through clinical and personal stories and research-based guided mindfulness exercises, readers learn and apply the benefits of mindfulness and compassion in order to foster clarity, acceptance, and strength. Each short chapter offers practical guidance for coping with symptoms, relating to loved ones, and staying mindful even when under medical treatment or while in a hospital.

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MINDFULNESS, COMPASSION  
& CONNECTEDNESS



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Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN

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## The Author



**Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, RN**, is a researcher, educator, and clinician. From 2001 to 2007, she was an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and research center director at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA, where she led research efforts aimed to improve the quality of life and quality of care for cancer patients. In 2007, she was selected for an esteemed five-year award, Distinguished Cancer Scholar of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, and has since served as a tenured faculty member at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. She has had a productive program of research funded by the National Institutes of Health and prominent foundations. She has been a faculty member for the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Mindfulness training programs and the Upaya Zen Center's educational programs. She also facilitates healing and resiliency retreats and workshops and meditation training programs for health care professionals and people with serious illnesses and their families.

## What is meant by living fully?

"Dr. Bauer-Wu asks early on in her book, "What is meant by living fully?" Her response to this treasured question is that to live fully means to be open to all possibilities. She suggests that living fully means being curious about life's journey, and cultivating a sense of ease, as well as meaning, even though the road may have many twists and turns. Dr. Bauer-Wu also points toward the importance of accepting all of life, even the hard parts, and when it means we must face our dying, then living that dying fully."

— Joan Halifax, PhD, Upaya Institute, New Mexico

## More Praise

"*Leaves Falling Gently* offers a direct, compelling and practical guide to living fully even if facing serious illness. It can open doors of possibility for us whatever our own situation, and help us help our friends and family at the very time when we so rarely know how to respond."

— Sharon Salzberg, Author of *Real Happiness and Lovingkindness*

"*Leaves Falling Gently* beautifully combines the wisdom of reflection, the rigor of science, and the beauty of a deeply engaged heart, as Dr. Bauer-Wu guides readers in how to live fully and gracefully with serious illness. With gentle clarity, this book offers a wealth of ideas and practices illuminating a way of being that has the power to transform our individual and collective lives."

— Shauna L. Shapiro, PhD, Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology, Santa Clara University, Co-Author of *The Art and Science of Mindfulness*

"When you open the pages of this book, you will be looking into a mirror. The reflection you will see is tenderness accompanied by the sublime fragrance of self-compassion. Stay for awhile, gazing into your image, breathing deeply the rich scent of your life and the embrace of care and love that you are capable of offering to yourself now and every remaining moment of your life."

— Saki F. Santorelli, EdD, MA, Executive Director, Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, University of Massachusetts Medical School

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