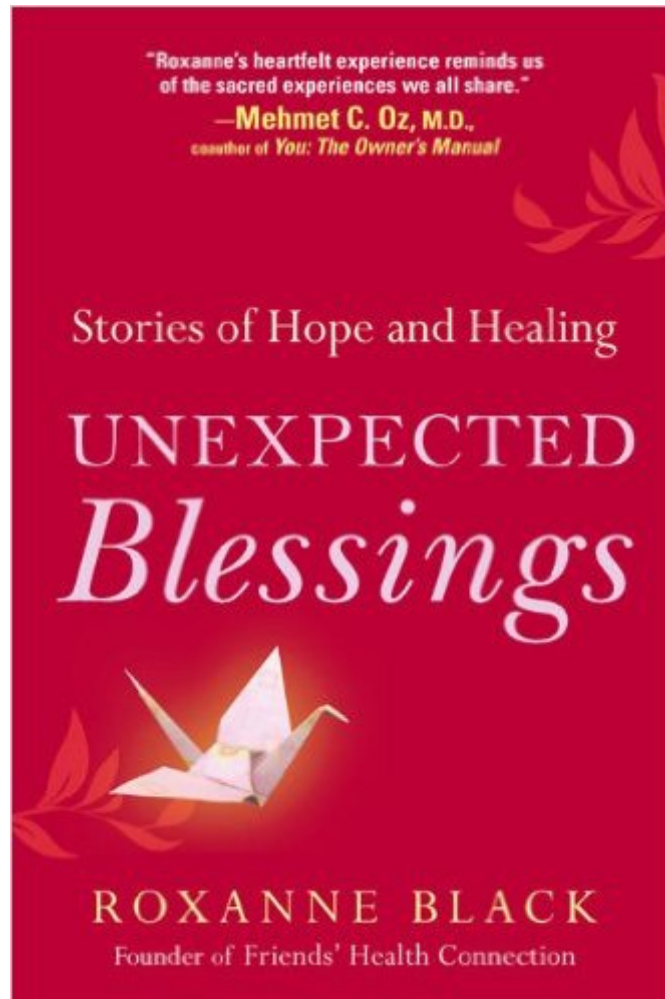


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# Unexpected Blessings: Stories Of Hope And Healing



## Synopsis

"Roxanne's heartfelt experience reminds us of the sacred experience we all share." Mehmet C. Oz, M.D., coauthor of *YOU: The Owner's Manual* Beautifully drawn stories of hope, healing, and courage illuminate the unexpected blessings that lie beyond the hurdles in life. When Roxanne Black was only fifteen years old, she was diagnosed with lupus, a chronic inflammatory disease. As a teenager with a rare and potentially life-threatening illness, Roxanne yearned to connect firsthand with others who knew what she was experiencing. So she made the decision to turn her diagnosis into something positive. Working out of her hospital bedroom, she founded Friends' Health Connection, which is now a nationwide community that matches people with similar health conditions for friendship and mutual support. *Unexpected Blessings* brings to life Roxanne's moving personal story, as well as the wisdom and lessons of courage she has learned over the years from famous leaders and celebrities, as well as everyday heroes standing strong against adversity. We meet Sara, an eight-year-old mature beyond her years, who is struggling with AIDS and the loss of her mother, and Ruby, a chronically ill woman whose devoted husband eases her pain. We experience Roxanne's poignant encounter with Christopher Reeve before his death, and also see unbelievable kindness and acts of love-family members offering transplant organs to save loved ones, strangers supporting one another through crisis, and more. These powerful stories and reflections weave together a rich tapestry of hope, comfort, and inspiration, and serve as reminders of the incredible resilience of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming challenge. In this gorgeously written book, Roxanne Black reminds us of the courage we all possess.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a winner. I started reading it on Sunday morning, thinking I'd cover a couple of chapters to begin with, and then just kept reading. Through her own story and the stories of a number of other remarkable people, Roxanne Black celebrates our humanity. People can be something else--they take heavy hits but in those hits can be found, as stated in the very apt title to Roxanne's book, unexpected blessings. This is not a Pollyanna book--it looks at hard realities in life, and in the midst of pain and suffering and the terrible truth that life is not fair, it affirms life and the extraordinary power and grace of which humans are capable. It is hard for me to imagine any reader who would not find reward and inspiration in *Unexpected Blessings*. The book itself is an unexpected blessing; I cannot recommend it more highly.

I was in my local Barnes and Noble when I saw this book and was instantly taken back to a day, about 12 years ago, when I first learned about Roxanne and Friends' Health Connection. I was eager to read her story, but this book is so much more than that. It's a very well-written gift to anyone who has experienced a chronic health issue in any capacity--self, spouse, child, or even parent. She is honest, knows how and when to laugh about illness, and is a breath of fresh air amidst all the gloom and doom we often come across in tales of battling health problems. Diagnosed at 15 with Lupus, she began to long for connections with others who knew how she felt. After forming a local group, she began to see the need to open up to anyone facing a health challenge and founded FHC while still a teenager. This wonderful group is now online: [...] and is an amazing gift to all of us from a courageous young woman who could have decided to fold up in self-pity but chose instead to use her experience to help others learn how to truly LIVE--not just cope--with chronic illness. Please pick up this book if you or someone you love struggles with any health challenge at all. It'll inspire you, give you strength, make you laugh, give you hope, put a spring in your step, and most important of all, it will reassure you that you aren't alone in your struggle.

Still my favorite book! I gave the paperback one to a friend of mine and she loved it. I ordered this (hardcover) and I love it. I am going to reread it since it is one of my favorite book and it inspired me.

The author of the book, Roxanne Black, is afflicted with lupus, a serious auto-immune disease. She has spent many hours in dialysis and has undergone two kidney transplants, or rather three; first

she received a kidney from her sister, but when this ceased to function she received two tiny kidneys from an 8-month old baby, Though having to endure much suffering, Roxanne learnt how to deal with it by devoting her life to helping others. She founded something called "Friends' Health Connection", through which she helped to connect other seriously ill, lonely and isolated persons by pairing them with other persons suffering from the same disease, or who were in a similar situation. Roxanne hereby brought much comfort and companionship to others. This book, apart from being extremely well-written, is wonderfully inspiring and heart-warming. As well as telling us about her upbringing in her loving and supportive family, and her various trials and tribulations, she communicates to us her positive view of life. She shows us how she was able to transform extremely difficult life circumstances to opportunities to help thousands of others, thereby creating an absolutely meaningful life for herself. She describes the inspiration she herself received from how Christopher Reeve, though paralysed from the neck down, tackled his predicament. I would recommend this book especially to those in difficult situations who need inspiration and encouragement. It helps the readers to realize that their own situation is not that bad and that they too have the option of helping themselves by helping others.

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