

The courage and compassion to cope

Business



My Sister's Keeper and A Walk to Remember: The Courage and Compassion to Cope " Cancer changes your life, often for the better. You learn what's important, you learn to prioritize, and you learn not to waste your time. You tell people you love them.

" Joel Siegel. The book My Sister's Keeper, Jodi Picoult and the movie A Walk to Remember (2002) both use personal strength to have courage and compassion in telling the story of two young women living with leukemia from the perspective of them and their loved ones. This shed a new light on people with leukemia and gave the public a better insight on the struggles that come with being diagnosed. This year 13, 298, 726 people in the world are living with cancer, or have died from it (2010 World Clock). This huge number doesn't count all the people who have been affected and are not diagnosed. Cancer affects everyone and it takes courage and compassion to cope.

Leukemia is a type of cancer that occurs in the blood or bone marrow.

Leukemia causes an uncontrolled growth of abnormal white blood cells, the infection fighting cells in the blood (Leukemia Symptoms). There are many short term effects that are associated with having leukemia, the body less able to fight off infection, there can be fatigue, excessive bleeding/bruising, aches in joints or bones, and enlarged glands. Many of the long term effects of leukemia, along with other cancers, come from chemotherapy, the treatment of disease by means of chemicals that have a specific toxic effect upon the disease-producing microorganisms or that selectively destroy cancerous tissue (Random House Dictionary). After receiving chemotherapy

you are more likely to develop a cancer in the future, become anemic, and develop heart problems.

(Ray). There are thirteen different types of leukemia the main six are; Acute lymphocytic leukemia, Acute myeloid leukemia, Chronic lymphocytic leukemia, Chronic myeloid leukemia, Hairy cell leukemia, and Adult T-cell leukemia (Leukemia Symptoms). There are over 20, 000 new cases of leukemia diagnosed each year (Leukemia Symptoms). It is said everybody in the world will have an experience with cancer in their lifetime; this is why the public is so interested in this issue. In the stories of *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult, and *A Walk to Remember* (2002) the lives of two young women are affected by leukemia, the stories both tell the struggles they, and their loved ones face while dealing with it. In *My Sister's Keeper* (Picoult) 13 year old Anna Fitzgerald was born to be a donor for her older sister, Kate, who was diagnosed with leukemia at a young age.

Anna no longer wants to be a donor to her sister and decides to sue her parents for the rights to her own body. Throughout this story Anna uses her personal strength to find the courage to deal with the problems her sister having leukemia has created for her and her family. " Maybe who we are isn't so much about what we do, but rather what we're capable of when we least expect it." (Picoult). Kate Fitzgerald was diagnosed with leukemia when she was only 2 years old. Now at 16 she has been courageously living with cancer for 14 years of her life.

She has had to always have courage in herself and hopes that she will one day be free of cancer. In *A Walk to Remember* Landon Carter befriends and

eventually falls in love with Jamie Sullivan. Throughout their time together Jamie is holding a big secret, Landon eventually finds out that she has terminal leukemia. Both Jamie and Landon have to acquire the personal strength to be courageous and still live life everyday with a hope for tomorrow “ Maybe God has a bigger plan for me than I had for myself. Like this journey never ends. Like you were sent to me because I’m sick, to help me through all this.

You’re my angel” (Moore). In all delicate situations there is a great need for compassion. Both Kate and Jamie are surrounded by people who love them, as are many people who everyday are being diagnosed with leukemia and other types of cancer. In *My Sister’s Keeper* (Picoult) Anna has to still be compassionate toward her sister, while fighting for her own rights. It is a struggle for her but she manages to be there for her sister, to love and support her throughout the story. Kate on the other hand has to be compassionate of her family, although she is going through an extremely difficult time in her life Kate manages to show her family how much they mean to her and how their love helps her everyday.

While in *A Walk to Remember* Landon struggles everyday to accept the fact that the woman he loves is dying. He goes to great lengths to show Jamie everyday how much he loves her and cares for her. With his help, Jamie completes all of the activities she wanted to do in her lifetime. “ Right now, you’re straddling the state line, you are in two places at once” (West). Jamie everyday has given compassion to the people around her. She does volunteer work, and helps her fellow peers, although she herself is dying everyday because of her leukemia.

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She is a strong young woman and through all her hardships still manages to bring love and joy to those around her. Cancer affects everyone in some way in their lifetime. I feel the works of *My Sister's Keeper* and *A Walk to Remember* portray what it is like to experience having a diagnosis of cancer in your life. Out of the 13, 298, 726 people this year whose lives have been directly affected by cancer, it is likely yours has been as well. Cancer affects everyone and it takes personal courage and compassion to cope.