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Ian Gawler Audio Books

About Ian Gawler

From an ABC Interview: In 1975, when Ian Gawler was just 24, he was diagnosed with bone cancer, and had his right leg amputated. "I grew up with that very simple notion that if you're a good person like will treat you kindly," he remembers, "but my life didn't follow that script too much."

He said 'goodbye' to his leg before the amputation. "I wrote it a fairly poignant letter the night before I had it amputated," he says. "I basically thanked it and said how much I'd enjoyed the physicality of it and how well it had served me... I also said, it seemed to me a sense of destiny... This was something that was inevitable in my life.

"When something like this happens, you've got a choice of, is this actually a random act? Is it just bad luck, or is there some meaning in it? If you consider these major changes in your life as bad luck, with no cause, you'd naturally consider yourself to be a victim... You'd end up with a very poor view of life. I'd rather say that cause and effect is something that rules through our life. It's got to be some sort of commentary on the life you've been living previously."

After the amputation, Ian was warned that if the cancer reappeared, he was likely to die within three to six months. It did reappear, and by March 1976, he was given two weeks to live.

[Ian Gawler](#)

Ian didn't accept his death sentence, although he acknowledges that some people would. "Some people quite reasonably and rightly get into that position, and they do accept it... This is quite hard also for their family [as] they accept it's their time, this is the way I'm going to go... I'm always conscious in talking about this... In that situation, people have a choice of how they approach it...I was clearly adamant I was going to do whatever it took... [I was] determined to get well."

Ian and his wife traveled to the Phillipines, where he received treatment from healers, and when the couple returned to Australia, Ian concentrated on meditation, diet and a wide range of natural therapies to rid his body of cancer. Ian's body has now been free of cancer for nearly 30 years.

He's also known throughout Australia, as director of the Gawler Foundation, and also for his

book, *You Can Conquer Cancer*.

[Gawler Ian Meditation](#)

Relaxation, Meditation and Imagery - Ian Gawler

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Gawler Audio Book CD



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What to do when someone you love

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Ian Gawler and the Gawler Foundation

Ian Gawler's Medical and Work Related History- including some of the philosophy at the heart of The Gawler Foundation's work with people affected by cancer

Ian Gawler is one of Australia's best known cancer survivors and advocates of a healthy lifestyle. His story offers hope and inspiration to people across the country. The self-help techniques that he developed have helped many to convert hope into sustained health and peace of mind. A pioneer in Mind-Body Medicine, Dr Gawler is known for his clarity and good humour. With a gift for translating ancient wisdom into a modern context and having appeared widely in the media, Ian has played a major part in popularising meditation and other Mind-Body Medicine techniques in the western world.

Ian's own history, which is often misquoted, offers an example of the complex history of a long-term cancer survivor. In 1975, as a young veterinarian and decathlon athlete, aged 24, Ian had his right leg amputated because of osteogenic sarcoma (bone cancer). Later that year inoperable secondaries were confirmed in the right inguinal and mediastinal lymph nodes. In those days, he was told available chemotherapies were of no value and radiotherapy would be palliative at best. The prognosis of 3-6 months was considered reasonable. Ian, therefore, turned to diet, meditation and other self-help techniques. Ian had the belief that cancer involved a failure of the body's natural defenses including the immune system. He felt that if it was possible to find a way to reactivate the body's inner capacity for healing, then perhaps he could recover. Initially Ian followed the Gerson Diet. This was exceedingly rigorous and despite full support from his first wife Grace, it created many problems. These days, Ian does not advise using the Gerson Diet as for most people it is extremely demanding in a home setting. However, he does believe it has enough merit to warrant serious study.

[Ian Gawler Audio Book CD in New Zealand](#)

Ian feels sure that nutritional factors helped him a great deal. Many patients report the positive benefits associated with changing their diets. There is a good body of evidence to indicate that nutrition can alter the outcome of cancer. Numerous animal studies confirm the proposition, and while studies in humans have been more limited, in breast and prostate cancer specifically there is strong evidence that diet indeed can be curative.

In response to his cancer, Ian also began meditation with the Melbourne based, and now deceased psychiatrist, Dr Ainslie Meares. Dr Meares believed that prolonged meditation could reduce cortisol levels, improve immune function and so lead to recovery.

For the first three months after the diagnosis of secondaries, Ian's tumours remained static. Then severe sciatic pain forced him to try acupuncture (two treatments only) then palliative radiotherapy (three treatments to his lower lumbar region only). The pain continued to be severe but was then relieved by injections of a mistletoe extract (Plenisol) administered by a GP interested in natural therapies. By March 1976, Ian was suffering severe weight loss (though 1.8m he weighed 54kg), jaundice, night sweats and hydronephrosis (obstruction) of the

right kidney. The pain was again severe. At this point Ian's surgeon considered his prognosis to be a couple of weeks.

Ian then left for four weeks with faith healers in the Philippines. This was a truly extraordinary experience which challenged all Ian's preconceptions and experience of surgery. Importantly he came home 6kg heavier, with no pain and feeling he had turned the corner. In the next six months, while Ian's general health improved, the cancer itself continued to spread and grow. He maintained the modified diet and meditation while Grace did many hours of massage for him. They also investigated and experimented with many natural therapies. By late 1976 Ian had massive secondaries on his sternum (photographs of these are in the back of Ian's book "You Can Conquer Cancer"), left lung, lumbar spine, mediastinal and inguinal lymph nodes. Remarkably, he was free of pain and otherwise unaffected by this widespread cancer. However, Ian reconsidered the medical options.

He was offered experimental chemotherapy based on adriamycin, vincristine and methotrexate. Ian completed the first round of this protocol in two and a half months but there was little change in his tumour sizes. He then elected to cease treatment despite warnings of a rapid rebound in the tumour's growth. Ian returned to the Philippines for three months, travelling then to India. In May 1977, the holyman Sai Baba told Ian: "You are already cured, don't worry." This was another major turning point, as it helped him to dispel doubts and be fully confident of recovery.

Ian had no more medical treatment but continued, fully committed, to the self-help regimen as described.

By June 1978 all visible lesions had subsided. Medical tests in Adelaide confirmed that there was no evidence of active cancer, but that he did have TB! He responded rapidly to standard TB treatment, and his case was reported by Meares. Ian and Grace moved to Yarra Junction, Victoria in 1980. They had four children after Ian's chemotherapy. Ian and Grace separated in 1997 and Ian is now remarried to Dr Ruth Gawler, a GP with a Masters Degree in General Practice Psychiatry and a special interest in Mind/Body Medicine, Counselling and Holistic techniques. Ruth has been working with Ian at The Foundation 2001.

Obviously this is a complex history. Ian is often asked what cured him, and replies that it was a combined result. Ian has no doubt that the medical treatment on its own would have been unsuccessful. His recovery demanded a great deal of effort from both himself and from Grace. Rather than just one thing in particular, it seemed that many useful things had combined to produce such a spectacular result. In 1981, Ian and Grace began an innovative cancer support group based upon his experiences. At that time little was being offered to people affected by cancer who wanted to help themselves. Patients were being left to fend for themselves. Hope was often denied and the myth of cancer as a death sentence prevailed. Ian was keen to redress these painful problems and felt that he had something important to offer. The main ingredients of his approach were (and still are) good nutrition, developing a positive state of mind, meditation and mutual support. These patient-based cancer self-help programs gained wide interest. In 1983 a non-profit, non-denominational charitable organisation was founded to

extend this work and Ian left his veterinary practice. In 1984 Ian detailed his approach in *You Can Conquer Cancer*. The book was launched by Sir Edward 'W early'Dunlop who remained a strong supporter of this work. The book has sold over 100,000copies in Australia and a new, completely revised Edition was released in 2001. Also,in 1984,being keen on scientific evaluation,Ian unsuccessfully approached the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute in Melbourne and the Victorian Anti-Cancer Council for help with research. Like many self-help groups,The Foundation's resources were limited and could get no outside assistance for researchat that time.

In 1987,The Foundation began developingits own extensive in-house database witha view to follow-upresearch. In the same year Ian was awarded the Order of Australia medal for services to the community and published a detailed account of his meditation and positive thinking methods in the book *Peace of Mind*. In 1988on the ABC's *Couchman Across Australia*, Professor Ray Lowenthal challenged Ian to present his 50 best cases for assessment. Ian readily agreed,but the proposal lapsed when Professor Lowenthal was unable to secure funding for the research from the Australian Cancer Foundation. The Foundation is now co-operatingon a major researchproject with Swinburne University,has helped fund a major study with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technologyand continues with its own in-house research projects. The Foundation welcomes both prospective participants and medical visitors to our programs and many doctors have attended as patients,partners or observers. These people see what can be accomplished. Remarkable transformations occur when people attend an active cancer support group. The hope,energyand vitality in these groups is truly amazing and quite inspiring. People learn to communicate,to balance their lives,to clarify their goals and to work effectively towards them.

The Foundation uses strategies in its programs to help people avoid guilt and to find the peace of mind that is a major focus of Ian's work. At The Foundation,we never say we can cure cancer. We believe that it is possible for people to learn how to cure themselves. Our self-help programs'stated intention is to help cancer-affected people improve their quality of life and contribute wherever possible to their own survival. People learn to live well and to die well--when their time does come. There have been many cases of remarkable recovery where people have survived against the odds. The self-help approach augments conventional therapies and,at the very least,plays a vital role in meetingthe human needs of everyone affected by cancer. There is a widespread feeling that doctors need to attend better to the psychological and spiritual needs of their patients. We have a system that has been doingthis effectively for more than 21years and happily share it.

W hen Ian began this work in 1981,the whole area was unexplored. Now support groups are cominginto most cancer hospitals and patients are seeking the self-help options. The Foundation's approach has always been to encourage cooperation and communication between patients and doctors. Best results are obtained when doctors work with patients and their families in partnership. Many doctors do refer their patients to The Foundation and

manymore encourage their patients to include self-help techniques as part of their healing equation. We believe good doctors always have done so, and hope more doctors will have the confidence to support patients and families effectively in these self-help efforts. The Foundation's aim is to provide information that is available in a balanced way, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own decisions. We then support people actively as they work towards healing, good health and wellbeing.

The Foundation's 12 week cancer self-help program has been running continuously since 1981. The ten-day residential program, "Life & Living", for people affected by cancer was commenced in 1985. These programs have evolved constantly in response to feedback from those attending, new research and the ongoing experience of our group leaders. The groups, the teachings and the support The Foundation provides, are all based upon the expressed needs of people affected by cancer--the patients, the partners, the friends and carers. We aim to help people to feel better and to live longer! The crucial question is: why do some patients recover when others with the same illness do not? At The Gawler Foundation, we are confident that there is more to this than just good luck. Finding out what makes the difference, what people can do to make a difference, is what we are most interested in studying and what new patients are interested to learn about. We suggest that it is possible to learn from successful patients, just as we could learn from successful sporting or business people. After 21 years, and having helped well over 12,000 people through the groups we have run, all of us at The Foundation know we have the experience and the expertise to help and are committed to doing so. If you feel that we can be of help to you or someone you love, please do contact us personally.

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