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BRINGING YOUR PRACTICE TO LIFE



soul survivor

A yogi with cancer shows others a healing path.

"Yoga was my awakening," says Kris Carr. The former actress and dancer had begun her Jivamukti Yoga practice years earlier as a way to heal injuries from a lifetime of dance and as a respite from her hectic life in New York City. But five years ago, when the deep twists of her practice had become unbearable and doctors were unable to determine the cause of the pain in her torso, Carr insisted on a CT scan. The 31-year-old was diagnosed with a rare and incurable cancer that had started in her liver and metastasized to her lungs. "I believe that yoga made me more in tune with my body and brought me to the place where I could access the power of my inner physician, that wise voice that says, 'Something is wrong—act now,'" Carr says.

As she grappled with her diagnosis, Carr found that the yogic concepts introduced to her by Jivamukti Yoga founders Sharon Gannon and David Life resonated as they never had before. She chose a vegan diet, both for her own health and for the health of the planet. She added meditation to her asana practice, which gave her the focus she needed to make clear decisions about her health and the way she wanted to live. As Carr explored alternative therapies for her body and spirit, she began recording

PHOTO: MELANIE ACEVEDO

INSIDE WELLNESS HERBS RELATIONSHIPS GIFTS FOOD STYLE PEOPLE

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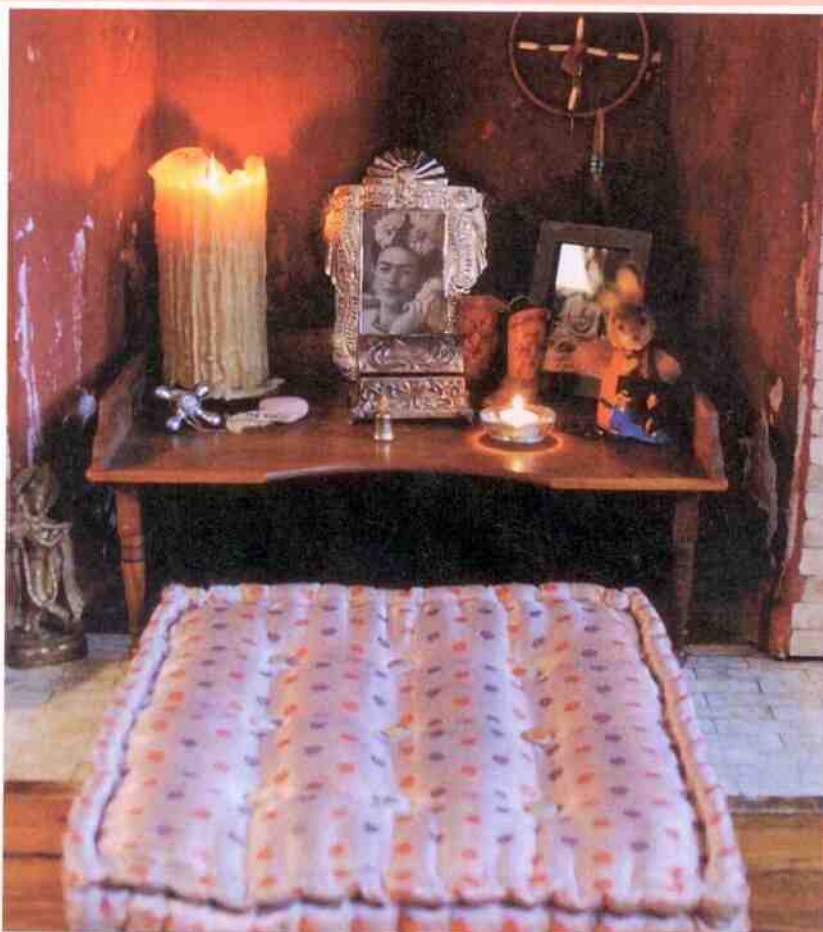
• a video diary of her cancer treatment. The result was an irreverent, spirited documentary called *Crazy Sexy Cancer*, which was broadcast on the Learning Channel and the Discovery Channel in 2007 and is now available through Gaia; an accompanying self-help book is titled *Crazy Sexy Cancer Tips*. Both the film and the book address the unique problems and lack of community that young women with cancer face.

"The book and the documentary were my way of creating *sangha* [spiritual community]," Carr explains. "I don't have all the answers, and I learned that we all have so much to share and teach each other."

Thus went Carr's transformation from patient to well-being advocate. She started a social networking website, *my.crazysexylife.com*, where those living with cancer or seeking a healthier lifestyle can share holistic healing tips. And she has plans to establish a nonprofit foundation that will give cancer patients resources for participating in the maintenance of their health and well-being.

Five years postdiagnosis, Carr's cancer is stable, and her new book, *Crazy Sexy Cancer Survivor: More Rebellion and Fire for Your Healing Journey*, will be released in September. Carr's busy schedule teaching workshops on nutrition, meditation, and yoga for cancer patients has redefined her yoga practice.

"Cancer is not a gift. I wouldn't give it to you," she explains. "But it was a catalyst for change in my life. I wanted to give others permission to laugh again and realize they are still whole people who are not just defined by a diagnosis, or a disease." STACIE STUKIN



the healer within

Stay grounded through cancer treatment or other difficult journeys with Carr's tips.

DEDICATE SPACE FOR REFLECTION "It can be as simple as a candle on your nightstand," Carr writes. "It helps to have a corner of your home that feels sacred."

CALM YOUR BREATH Notice when you're holding your breath or taking rapid, shallow breaths, and make an effort to focus on your inhalation and exhalation.

FIND A PERSONAL REFUGE Choose a location with meaning for you—a beach, a park, a special place from childhood—and go there. "Even if it's just for a few hours, find a way to take a mental hiatus from cancer."

MAKE JUICE, NOT WAR Think of preparing your own food as an expression of self-love, says Carr, who adopted a mostly raw diet after her diagnosis and makes 17 to 32 ounces of juice every day.

CREATE A POSSE Think of your team of doctors, nutritionists, yoga teachers, massage therapists, friends, and family members as an invaluable wellness support group.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, BUT LIVE IN THE NOW No one can give you permission to live the way you want to, except you.