

DBP Book Review

Name of Book: Why, Charlie Brown, Why?: A Story About What Happens When a Friend Is Very Ill	Author: Charles M. Schulz
Publisher: The Ballantine Publishing Group	Date of Publication: 1990/2002
Name of Reviewer: Robert Finkelstein	Date of Review: April 2007
Intended Audience (choose from Parents, Children, Professional, Other): Children, possibly parents	
Purpose of the book: To teach children about serious illness, specifically leukemia.	
Theoretical Basis: Children (and adults) will likely have a wide range of emotions when confronted with the illness of a friend or loved one. They may not understand the illness, how it is contracted and what treatment entails. They may feel a desire to protect those who are ill, but not have the knowledge to do so. They may also be afraid that it could happen to them. Familiar characters and common situations are explored to provide knowledge and comfort to readers.	
Strengths: The characters are familiar to most and Schultz creatively uses their personalities to dispel myths and challenge ignorance (e.g. Lucy thinks she can catch leukemia) and show the courageousness of both those who are sick and the friends who support them. Includes a glossary of common medical terms.	
Weaknesses: At the end of the book, the girl afflicted with leukemia who was previously ridiculed because of alopecia reveals triumphantly that she now has hair. It is inspiring and important for children to see that one can recover from serious illness and that things often get better. However, this end seems to put too much focus on hair rather than normalizing the experience of losing one's hair. Having said this, it is true that many children will wonder if their hair will ever grow back and it may be helpful for them to see that this will happen, since alopecia is a strong symbol of having cancer.	
Recommendation of Reviewer (please choose one and put "X" in box next to selection):	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly recommend for all parents

X	Highly recommend for parents with specific problems/issues
	May be useful to some parents
	Would not recommend
Additional Comments: Probably most useful for those wishing to use the story to help children or themselves in dealing with leukemia. Likely to be most appreciated by those who know and like the Peanuts comic strip. Also available animated for television.	