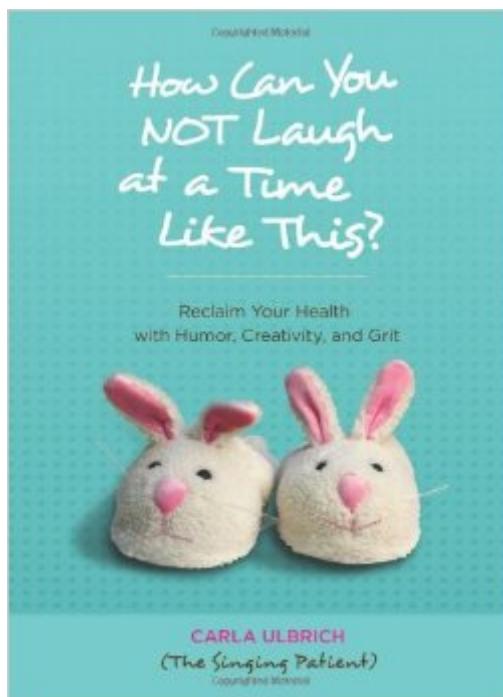


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# How Can You NOT Laugh At A Time Like This?: Reclaim Your Health With Humor, Creativity, And Grit



## **Synopsis**

Having a sense of humor is essential to health, says singer-songwriter Carla Ulbrich, who has found laughter to be a lifesaver during tough times. Under the stress of multiple illnesses and constant health "care," Ulbrich one day snapped and became the Singing Patient. She channeled her hard won victories, set about reclaiming her health, and penned *How Can You NOT Laugh at a Time Like This?*, a collection of short, inspiring, funny essays that help people thrive and celebrate life despite illness. As Ulbrich spins her tale (and shares some songs), she lampoons common fears and prejudices about illness and lovingly lambastes the foibles of the medical industry. She offers heartfelt and humorous advice for navigating mainstream and alternative therapies, and she guides partners, families, and friends who wish to help their loved ones. Her candid insights, wisecracking commentary, handy lists, hilarious song lyrics, and gentle camaraderie will put a smile on the face of anyone who wants to face illness with courage and humor.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This little book is big on helpful advice and creative ideas. Carla Ulbrich shows us how we can all have an influence on our health and indeed, our lives. We can take charge of a lot, rather than just be reactive to what happens to us. This book is highly recommended. It focuses on the role of laughter and who can't use more laughter in their life? This book is recommended for everyone who is sick, and everyone who is well and wants to stay that way. The stories are short so can be read anytime you have a few minutes to spare.

If that headline doesn't peak your interest, hopefully this review of the book will. Here is a matter-of-fact, common sense opus that truly proves (in the author's words) that an illness is what you "have" and is not what you "are"!! Carla Ulbrich is a wonderfully talented songstress (sorry about the word stress - read the book to find many suggested remedies for that) and folk comedienne who has overcome several setbacks that life has tossed in her path and through her experience has captured the true essence and meaning of the word perseverance. She has proven that anything in life, including illness, can be overcome by education (do your own and don't rely wholly on so-called "experts"), steadfastness of will (to give in is not productive as it doesn't change your present situation), positive thoughts (your own and from others), accepting help (no, we don't have to be everything to everyone and we have to know when to quit) and the willingness of the person to truly listen to the lessons that their life is teaching them (don't always focus on the negative and slide into a "poor me" lifestyle). As "The Singing Patient", Carla has flown into the face of adversity by channeling her personal health issues into a humorous and thought-provoking look at how we can either become our own worst enemy or best friend. She describes the importance of food choices as a dual-edged component of life that can either contribute to our illness or to our wellness - are you a "Crapatarian"? Do you consume too many "excitotoxins"? Are you taking enough "Vitamin F"? The bottom line is that Carla has finally put on paper what perhaps too many people are afraid to think about or to do something about and that is that despite unfortunate and sometimes life-altering events - life may not be fair, but it's ours and WE are in control of our lives!! To focus on making ourselves whole and to understand that "whole" means mind, body and soul, we have to find the silver lining and learn to make the proverbial lemonade. If you want a great supplement to this book, Carla's CD "Sick Humor" contains many of the songs referenced in the book and even with the frankness of some of the issues within those songs, they are truly funny and will make you laugh (unless, of course, you have no sense of humor whatsoever in which case you need to go back and read the book again)!! Thank you Carla for a wonderfully enjoyable and thought-provoking read!!!

First, by way of full disclosure, I need to say: I know the author of this book. More precisely, I knew her in high school, but lost touch with her after graduation. We reconnected on Facebook a year or so ago, which is how I found out about this book. With this context, then, let me ask: have you ever had the experience of meeting up with an old friend, perhaps over lunch, and as you sit and eat and chat, you find yourself laughing so hard you cry? For me, that was the experience of reading this book. It pains me to read about what my friend went through in the 25+ years since high school, but

I am also delighted to see that she has kept her sense of humor and appreciation of absurdity. The book is not a narrative of Carla's illnesses, but rather a series of essays about various coping mechanisms she has developed over 20 years of dealing with autoimmune disease. I found myself reading many passages out loud to my wife (who did a great spit-take when I read her the part about the coffee enemas). Stepping back for a moment, I must say that I am more skeptical about "alternative" treatments (acupuncture, qigong, coffee enemas...) than Carla is. She does not proselytize about such things, though, which I find refreshing. Rather, she just writes about what works for her. She happily acknowledges the placebo effect. Borrowing a turn of phrase from J.D. Salinger, I find Carla's approach to her illness "breathtakingly levelheaded." This is a light read in spite of its subject matter, and I would recommend it to anyone who is having difficulty coping with prolonged health problems. The particular treatment and lifestyle recommendations may not apply in all cases, but Carla's positive attitude is (in a good way) contagious. A quick note about the Kindle formatting: There is nothing particularly nonstandard about the text formatting in most of this book, so the Kindle handles it well. In the passages with song lyrics (Kindles are well-known for screwing up poetry), the lines are double-spaced, which makes the line breaks work out reasonably well even at large typeface sizes.

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