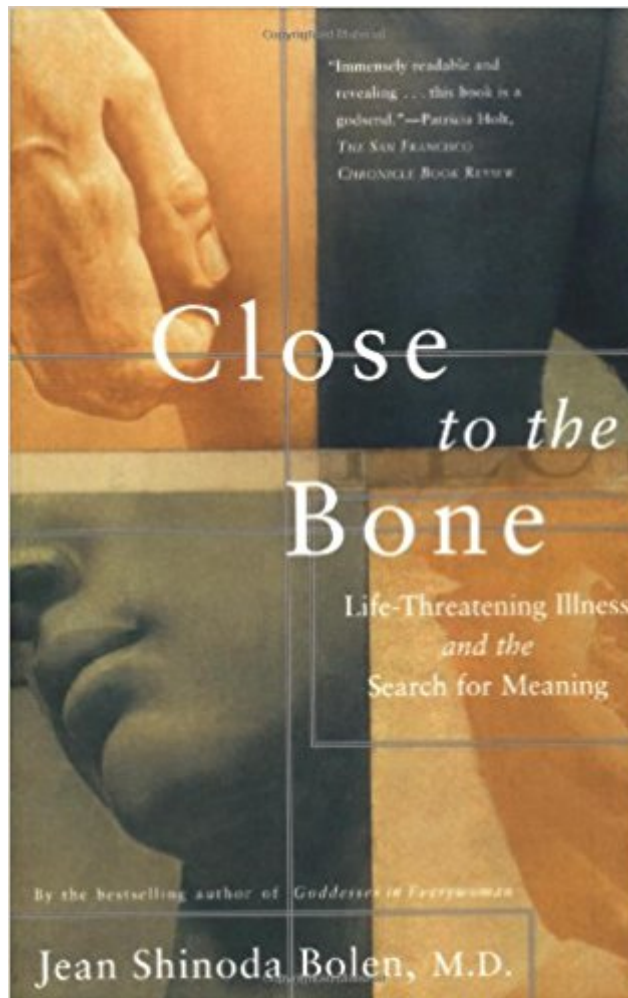


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# Close To The Bone: Life Threatening Illness And The Search For Meaning



## Synopsis

In this beautifully written and profoundly affecting new book, Dr. Jean Shinoda Bolen explores what it means when serious illness brings one "close to the bone": close to the soul's needs. As in her critically acclaimed best-seller *Goddesses in Everywoman*, the author weaves myth, experience, and story to produce a book which at once illuminates the experience of the seriously ill patient and shows that facing one's mortality can be a life-transforming, and even a life-saving, process. *Close to the Bone* follows the patients and their loved ones on a path which, soon after diagnosis, brings them into a kind of underworld of experience, a state of emotional trauma that has the potential to strip away what become merely superfluous concerns, focusing the individual on what is truly important. This process can be enhanced by prayer, meditation, participation in rituals, the sharing of stories, and a deeper and more honest level of communication with those we love and with ourselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The crisis brought on by a serious or disastrous illness is the concern of this richly probing essay by a Jungian analyst and medical doctor. Although various diseases are touched on, cancer—especially as it affects women—is Bolen's focus. Yet far from being a grim tract, this book is a kind of metaphysical how-to filled with hope, second chances and sound guidance. But from the very first "initiation story" the author narrates for us—the myth of the abduction to the underworld of Persephone, an ancient Greek emblem of spring, vitality, rebirth—Bolen makes clear that there are dark and dangerous realms to traverse to learn how to help make oneself well and whole again. In

her view, there is no mind/body split, no dichotomy between psyche and soma: the mind is everywhere in the body and affects physiological outcomes. While the book's Jungian tone will keep some readers away (even as it attracts others), and while it's not full of original ideas, it is a skillful assemblage of views on the harrowing experience of physical illness and mental dissociation from which we can and may emerge with a new clarity about who we are and what we want our lives to be. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From a best-selling author (*Goddesses in Everywoman*, LJ 7/84): advice on making serious illness a chance for growth. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

*Close to the Bone* is an absolute blessing for anyone going through a life-threatening illness and a saving grace for those who love and support that person. Dr. Bolen goes deeply into the psychological and spiritual components of a challenging illness and brings the light and warmth of understanding and compassion. Her use of mythological stories is brilliant and will change the way you look at a hospital stay. If you are sitting by the bed of a loved one, this is the book you should have near at hand.

I chose this book because I have liked the way Jean Shinoda Bolen thinks. The difficulties and joys of life illustrated in myth gave a broader context in which to see one's place in the world.

I did love this book! So many insights and compassionate ways to cope the disease as a journey of the self! I do recommend it!

This was a Great buy, someone recommended it, my mom died and now my husband is very sick, Great book.

This book is unlike any other I have read. The author is a Jungian analyst and clinical professor of psychiatry. To quote the book jacket, she "weaves myth, experience, and story to produce a book which at once illuminates the experience of the seriously ill patient and shows that facing one's mortality can be a life-transforming, and even a life-saving process". At a time when I was recovering from life-threatening illness myself, I heard the author speak at a lecture in Vancouver, and I found her use of classical myth as an allegory for illness to be quite effective. My friend Russell borrowed this book from me a few weeks before he died from cancer, and in a written note

he described it as "the right book at the right time".

Early in this beautiful book, Jean Shinoda Bolen reminds us that the Chinese pictograph for "crisis" contains the ideograms for both "danger" and "opportunity." I've worked with clients who deal with life-threatening illness, and it is almost invariably true that this experience raises important "soul-evoking" questions. To explore those questions is inevitably healing, whether in body, spirit, or both. As with any major crisis in life, we can either view the glass as half-empty, or see the gift that we are offered: the opportunity to re-examine our priorities, our relationships, and to do the soul-work that brings true meaning to life. Illness forces us to deal with "what we know in our bones" that we may have so far denied -- ways in which we are unhappy and/or self-destructive. And those of us who do not have life-threatening illness can learn from those who do. As Bolen points out, "Life is a terminal condition, after all." So we can all benefit from answering the questions she poses: "What are we here for... What did we come to learn... What and who did we come here to love?"

No doubt I would recommend this book. It gave me courage, grace and serenity to embrace the unknown. Thank you!

as the price. my family all need it , OK . perfect weight , perfect size ! cuts everything so neat ! I really recommend it ! love it .

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