



## **A Walk with Purpose: Memoir of a Bioentrepreneur**

Michael D. Becker

*Michael D. Becker, 439 pages, (paperback) \$16.99, 9781521179765*

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In November, 2015, shortly after turning 47, Michael D. Becker noticed that overnight a lump had appeared on the side of his neck. Becker was a veteran of the biotechnology industry, where he had served as president, chief executive officer, chief financial officer and member of the board of directors for several biotechnology companies. As such, he had become an expert on the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical device industries. When the lump was diagnosed as advanced oropharyngeal cancer, his life's work took on a much more important meaning.

*A Walk with Purpose* —the title comes from advice his father gave him —tells two distinct stories. The first, early on and again in the closing pages, is about Becker facing and battling his cancer. The second, which encompasses the middle two-thirds of the book, is more of a standard memoir, from the author's slightly rebellious youth to his noteworthy advancement from high school dropout to successful and respected CEO.

Just as the events in these two segments are distinct, so is the tone. The memoir pages, full of facts and names, aren't especially compelling and can get bogged down in industry or scientific details. For example: "[a company] was developing a pipeline of cancer therapies, including levofolinic acid (Fusilev[R]), the pure active isomer of calcium leucovorin, a component of 'standard care' 5-fluorouracil (5-FU)... "

When he addresses the cancer—the shock, formulating a treatment plan, the toll it takes on him and his family—the result is more interesting, more human, and ultimately, more touching. In the closing pages, Becker details picking out his grave site and offers advice for people in similar circumstances.

*A Walk with Purpose* has some minor grammatical issues, but it works not just as a narrative the author's family will treasure, but as a guide for others. Those who persevere through the dense passages of industry and scientific detail will find a touching look at a man facing his own mortality.

Also available as an ebook and audio book.