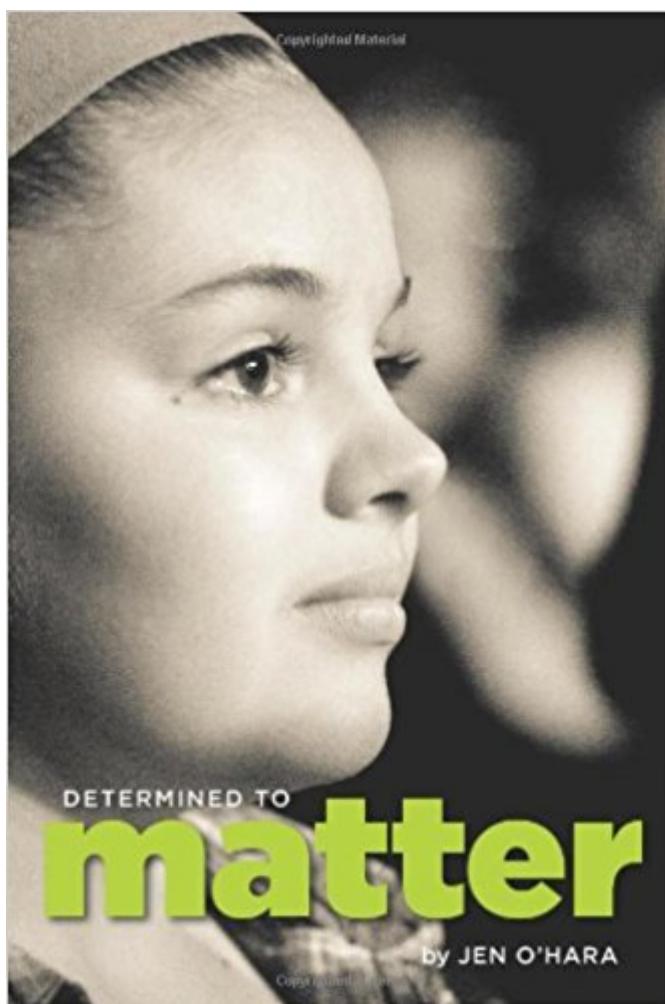


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# Determined To Matter: A Family Facing Inoperable Brain Cancer



## Synopsis

Shannon O'Hara, skating down the ice chasing after the puck, comes face to face with a larger-than-life opposing team player. Never one to back down from anything, barely five feet tall, Shannon tangles with the player and ends up with a penalty. As she sits in the penalty box&#151;only thinking about getting out in two minutes&#151;no one would ever imagine that this beautiful, vibrant, and competitive young spirit will be gone in 54 days. The devastating news that 12-year-old Shannon is diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor is unfathomable, surreal, and unimaginable. This is the raw and emotional story of the O'Hara's as they prepare for the fight of their lives, and their ultimate loss. Written and inspired by a blog that Dan and Jen O'Hara wrote to keep in touch with their family, friends, and supporters near and far, the story follows the yearlong battle from diagnosis to death and exemplifies how to live the "new normal" every day, no matter what it entails. Shannon's struggle reveals why family, faith, and hope are so important in our daily lives and how the support of a community plays such a vital role through the good times and especially the bad.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

O'Hara and her husband, Dan, try to make the best of a tragedyâ•their daughterâ•s death from brain cancer at age 13â•by sharing her story. They start by quoting Shannon: My life is going to mean something to someone, somewhere. They saw a doctor seven days after their daughter first complained of a headache and quickly received the depressing,

but correct, diagnosis. Readers with terminally ill children or those who know or work with such families will find the O'Haras' e-mail messages to their loved ones and a year's worth of blog entries inspiring on many levels. Some families may decide to chronicle their journey, too. On their darkest day, when their ice hockey-playing daughter died, on January 6, 2012, some 11,000 people viewed the O'Haras' blog post. In her thoughtful afterward, Dr. Cynthia Wetmore of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital writes that the O'Haras are so dedicated to helping find a cure that they delivered Shannon's tumor to her after her death. That donation, and this book, may help other families channel their grief in a positive way. --Karen Springen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"O'Hara and her husband, Dan, try to make the best of a tragedy; their daughter's death from brain cancer at age 13; by sharing her story. ...Readers...will find the O'Haras' email messages to their loved ones and a year's worth of blog entries inspiring on many levels. ...In her thoughtful afterward, Dr. Cynthia Wetmore of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital writes that the O'Haras are so dedicated to helping find a cure that they delivered Shannon's tumor to her after her death. That donation, and this book, may help other families channel their grief in a positive way." Booklist"Drawn from that original blog, with additional notes and photos, this book is a tribute to Shannon's memory and a testament to Jen and Dan's experiences. ...readers may embrace this as the story of a family coming together in the wake of a tremendous tragedy... Recommended for those able to find a sense of purpose in this heart-wrenching story." Library Journal"A brave, beautiful, bittersweet book; you will be a better person for reading it." Julie Jones, Radio Personality, Rochester, MN"Determined to Matter isÂ  beautifully put together and is absolutely heart rending to read.Â  Jen and Dan are so honest and open with their family's battle." Â• Rachel Schuldt, Executive Director Minnesota Wild Foundation"This is a remarkable story of a remarkable family who faced cancer and death of their daughter Shannon - an all too common experience for families. Reading this book helps us to be in touch with our own experiences with cancer and other health crisis experienced by our family and friends. Shannon, her journey and this story matters." Margaret Perryman, President/CEO, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, St. Paul, MN"The last half of the book tugs at the heartstrings as the reader walks with the family through Shannon's decline and passing, as well as witnesses their grief and valiant efforts at getting on with their lives. Determined to Matter is a good

read for anyone lacking in appreciation for those special people in their lives. It is a reminder to all to look around and really see what wonderful things those we love bring into our world." &#151; Compass Book Ratings" Determined to Matter is a heartfelt story of facing death at a young age, and the trials that family members of a gravely ill young adult endure." &#151; Midwest Book Review" ...a beautiful, honest expression of what a family goes through. They warn that it's not sugar-coated. It's not, and that's why it's so good. It's full of the range of emotions anyone would feel. Dan and Jen express it all." &#151; Mike Dougherty, Post-Bulletin, Rochester, MN" While she may be gone, she is certainly not forgotten." &#151; Paul Christian, Post-Bulletin, Rochester, MN" Hundreds of people kept up on Shannon's condition as her parents, Dan and Jennifer O'Hara, chronicled their daughter's final months in an honest, heart-wrenching online journal... Much like her passion for life and sense of humor, Shannon is remembered for her strength and determination." &#151; Christina Killion Valdez, Post-Bulletin, Rochester, MN

I have been following the O'hara's journey since day one of Shannon's diagnosis. They have traveled a road no family wishes to go down, but their heartfelt and honest posts have taught my family the importance of staying in the present, and appreciating the moments you have even when they aren't ideal. This is such a touching reflection of a traumatic journey told from the perspective of a 12 yr old, a mother, a father, a sister, even a pet and extended family and community. Shannon's courage and determination sticks with me daily, and the parenting moments Dan and Jen have shared - both struggles and joys - have shaped how I parent my own kids. I have a different perspective on the process of grief because of this book and a deeper understanding of how a family and a community is impacted by loss. Unfortunately, we all encounter families that are faced with tremendous loss and grief, and rarely do we know the exact right thing to say or do to show our support. The honesty in this book has stuck with me in those situations, and the continued blog posts are such an inspiring display of the impact Shannon continues to have on so many lives. Thank you Jen and Dan for courageously sharing your journey. Shannon will always matter!

Determined to Matter is a story about how truly amazing some people are. The strength, courage, and outlook Shannon had on life before she was diagnosed, during her treatment, and at the end reminds you that there are special people born who change your perspective forever. It's an emotional story, both heart-wrenching and inspiring at the same time. People are amazing. Life is precious. In 13 short years, Shannon accomplished more than most. The book's raw emotion cuts straight through to the reality of dealing with a terminal illness. While it is emotionally hard to read at

times, it will change your perspective on life and what really matters.

After seeing a posting on facebook about Shannon, I followed their blog, then when it was announced that they were writing a book, I pre-ordered the book. This is a heart-wrenching well written book by the parents.. It is a sad, sad ending, but is is so full of emotion, it hard to put down. Extremely well written and you will do a lot of soul search about yourself after reading.

I finally put this book to bed. I did get through it but it was a difficult read for me because in 2010 I lost my sister and my brother to brain tumors. I traveled many of the same paths the O'Hara's traveled. I could feel their feelings only because I had been there. I know all about Desk R and the hope we have that the treatment will save our loved one. You have to give these people credit for their courage. For telling this story. I recommend this book to anyone wanting to read about courage. determination, childhood brain tumors, schedules used to try and save a child's life, the beautiful child "Shannon" and her will to live her life, to beat the odds and the parents who did everything possible to save their child but most of all the most precious gift they gave to St. Jude's in an effort to stop this devastating tumor from taking another child. God Bless them for that. If you have children and they are healthy, appreciate that gift and enjoy your blessings because tragedy in brain tumors is life changing in so many ways. I want to Thank the O'Hara's for sharing. I sincerely hope life is kinder, memories a little easier and I know they realize what a beautiful gift Shannon was and will continue to be for anyone interested in reading her story.

The story none of us ever wants to live. This family is truly amazing - it's not been an easy road for them and they've suffered a huge loss but they continue to persevere and make the best of a really bad situation. I'd come to the blog Christmas Eve 2011 after hearing the news from family in Rochester. Knew of the O'Haras but do not know them. The blog was and continues to be very honest. I was a little afraid that the book simply a recital of the blog but it is not. It includes much more. A very good though heartbreakin read. I highly recommend it.

A difficult story - real and raw....but one that captures your heart! I still check their blog daily and pray for them regularly.

This is now my favorite book! It's about a little girl, Shannon O'hara, who is diagnosed with a brain stem glioma tumor. It shows her daily battles, as shown on her blogs. She died on January 6th,

2012. RIP SHANNON THE CANON! You are missed every day!

This family has walked through, and are still walking in, a very dark place. Through their writings, they have provided a light to follow for myself and others who have also found themselves in a similar dark place. You wonder how you can ever make it through - but this family shows you that you can, and even more, that you can find a way to make good things grow out of the bad.

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