

GREENWICH

**DAILY
VOICE**

Triathlete Shares Details Of Health Struggle At Greenwich Book Signing

by [Tom Renner](#) 01/21/2016 [neighbors](#)



Photo credit: Tom Renner

GREENWICH, Conn. -- Karen Newman smiled brightly and hugged hard as she met friends and readers of her new book Wednesday at Richards of Greenwich.

The good vibes for her book, "Just Three Words," stood in stark contrast to the battle confronted by the former Greenwich resident for the past 40 years, first with anorexia and bulimia, and then with breast cancer. Now, Newman's warm smile and engaging personality reflect her true persona. The road to get there was her personal hell.

"Writing this book has been a three-year journey," said Newman, who moved to Burlington, Vt., in 2014. "I didn't want to tell my deepest darkest secrets or expose my shame. But one day, I felt God telling me that I had to be authentic. I needed to share it all to help others heal. That meant calling my parents and exposing things I never wanted them to know. Sitting my husband and children down and sharing ugly things from my past. It meant crying, weeping and letting go, forgiving myself and rising up again."

Newman traced her eating disorder back to childhood, when she was bullied by classmates. Hurtful words impacted her tender, pre-teen soul. Her recourse was to hide her shame. Ironically, Newman worked for more than two decades as a nutritionist while fighting bulimia. She hid it, and she hid it well.

"A lot of people have no idea what I have done," Newman said. "I am sure that many will be shocked, but I can no longer live behind a veil of lies. If I am to do anything moving forward, it all has to be out in the open. This is my message. Don't be afraid. Love is out there waiting for you too. And triumph is just around the corner."

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Newman's turning point, again ironically, was cancer. Newman was diagnosed in March 2008. Three weeks before, she vomited eight times during one day in what she said was "the worst day of her life."

With her life careening out of control, Newman turned to her faith in God.

"I was blessed to be brought up in a Christian home but unfortunately my beliefs about God somehow got warped," Newman said. "I thought that God had a checklist and a whip and at the rate I was going, I was surely going to hell. I had no idea that he loved me/everyone unconditionally. That was a huge lesson that I learned through my cancer journey. Cancer brought me closer to God, deepened my faith and helped me crawl out

of the miry pit that I had fallen into. It helped me flourish and sent me in a glorious new, life giving direction.”

Through all her emotional and physical trials, Newman has maintained her status as an elite athlete. Nicknamed “Speedy” as a youngster, Newman still competes in international and national competition. In 2008, she finished the World Triathlon Championships just days after receiving her fourth chemotherapy treatment. She went on to become a seven-time All-American Triathlete and Team USA World Competitor. She won a silver medal at 2012’s Triathlon Age Group World Championships in New Zealand and was the top American participant. She qualified to represent the United States at the 2016 Age-Group World Triathlon championships in Mexico.

Newman’s struggle helped her gain perspective. “Cancer and staring death in the face forced me to look at my life. What was I doing? What legacy was I leaving for my family and the world? It was all about me before, collecting medals, idols that fade away. I am racing now for all the right reasons. For the joy of it.”

Newman hopes her book has a lasting legacy. People go through life challenges. Faith and determination go a long way toward solving them.

“My purpose in writing this book is it to help others heal from whatever demons, shame, labels, beliefs that might be keeping them from living an abundant life,” she said. “I hope that my story helps people see that often trials are opportunities if we can just change our perspective. And to let everyone know that there is God who loves them more than they could ever imagine.”

Newman's book can be purchased on Barnes & Noble and other online retailers. Click [here](#) for the link to her book on Barnes & Noble.