Can you really help yourself?

Is it possible to solve your problems with the aid of a book? Two readers gave it a try...

THE BOOK **BOUNCE: USE THE POWER OF RESILIENCE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT**
by Gill Hasson and Sue Hadfield

'Nobody goes through life without ups and downs. We all suffer similar misfortunes. The key is how you react to them. With *Bounce*, you are ready to face any adversity. Nothing is frightening.'

Nia Rana, 37, from Hounslow, Middlesex, has been married to Naj, 46, for four years. She is a full-time mum to Aiyla, three, and Adam, two

I'm a positive person by nature, but not even cheery old me can put a positive slant on the past six months.

Until the summer, I was a busy mum, rushing around after Aiyla and Adam.

But suddenly my whole life fell apart. I'd been noticing blood when I went to the loo and tests revealed bowel cancer.

Then Naj developed chronic stomach pains and nearly died during an eight-hour operation for a perforated bowel.

And the following month, my lovely, active mum Betsan, 67, had a devastating stroke and brain haemorrhage, which left her unable to speak and paralysed down her right side.

In October, I had an operation to remove part of my appendix and bowel. Now I'm starting six months of intensive chemo.

'Worry keeps me awake'

I'm trying not to mope, but I can't help feeling powerless. What if the chemo leaves me too weak to look after the kids? And I can't stop wondering if I brought this on myself by not having the healthiest lifestyle in my twenties.

The worry keeps me awake at night, where I sit eating junk food for comfort. I'm floundering and need guidance fast.

Nia says, 'I feel in control now'

This book speaks so much sense. It's right for me because it's all about regaining control of your life.

It talks about how the people around you can affect your well-being. So, since reading the book, I've decided to forget about friends who haven't been supportive. Instead, I'm concentrating on those like my best friend Mary, who's been by my side through all this.

I've stopped relying on others to make me feel good about myself – for instance, I've started buying myself flowers every week.

And I no longer blame myself for the cancer – but I cut out junk food. Already, I feel stronger and better equipped to fight this battle, and I've set myself a goal – to run Cancer Research UK's Race for Life next summer.

With thanks to www.cancerresearchuk.org

Nia is now ready to confront difficult situations head-on

Words: Louise Kelly. Photos: Tony Kyriacou and make up: Sharon Wilson's Model Face Mission Nia wears: Dress, M&S; leggings, Evans; shoes, Primark; necklace, Mint Velvet at Bluse of Fraser. Tara wears: Dress, Phase Eight; tunic, Evans; belt, Evans; shoes, Primark; clutch bag, Accessorize. Bounce (£12.99, Hodder & Stoughton) The secret (£12.99, Simon & Schuster)