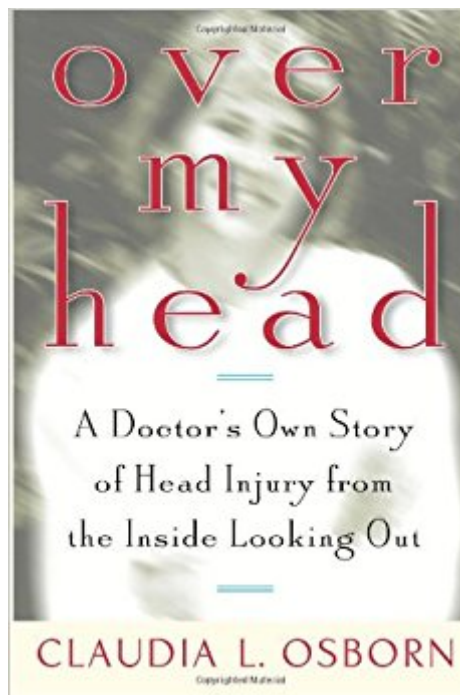




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Over My Head: A Doctor's Own Story Of Head Injury From The Inside Looking Out



Synopsis

Locked inside a brain-injured head looking out at a challenging world is the premise of this extraordinary autobiography. *Over My Head* is an inspiring story of how one woman comes to terms with the loss of her identity and the courageous steps (and hilarious missteps) she takes while learning to rebuild her life. The author, a 45-year-old doctor and clinical professor of medicine, describes the aftermath of a brain injury eleven years ago which stripped her of her beloved profession. For years she was deprived of her intellectual companionship and the ability to handle the simplest undertakings like shopping for groceries or sorting the mail. Her progression from confusion, dysfunction, and alienation to a full, happy life is told with restraint, great style, and considerable humor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Awareness about head-injury prevention has significantly increased in the last decade. Yet on one summer evening in 1988, a young physician out for a bicycle ride without a helmet was hit by a careless driver and sustained a devastating brain injury. This autobiographical account "from the inside looking out" details that physician's experience from the moment of impact through her remarkable comeback to resumption of teaching and research responsibilities. Her story shows the effect of a severe head injury on behavior and personality. This inspiring documentation will assist patients, families, and friends enduring the same difficulties and help health professionals understand and train their patients in the difficult rehabilitation process. Very highly recommended for consumer health and patient education collections. ?Janet Coggan, Univ. of Florida Libs.,

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Until her injury in July 1988, Claudia L. Osborn taught and practiced internal medicine in a busy inner-city Detroit hospital. A graduate of Vassar College and Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine, she is currently an Associate Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine at MSU, and makes her home in Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Claudia Osborn was a physician when she was hit by a car while riding her bike one night. This resulted in a traumatic brain injury. This book describes her journey afterwards, her treatment, her deficits, her futile hopes for the future and the grief when she realized she couldn't achieve them. She talks about her unwavering resolve to make herself able to function, by writing herself notes, recording directions on her tape recorder and filling notebooks with lists of how to go about her day. This book really made me understand how a tbi can affect a person in so many ways we cannot begin to see. It was fascinating and fun, thorough and intelligent, and I feel I and many others will benefit from reading this book, specifically for the understanding that it provides and the patience that it teaches. These lessons are good for us non-brain-injured people, too - especially the ones on acceptance and patience.

Dr. Claudia Osborn tells her amazing story of the transformation from an adept physician to a traumatic brain injury (TBI) patient following a life changing accident and of her long, painful journey of recovery. Her book is easy to read and understand and helps convey to the reader the experience of having a TBI from a very unique point of view - "from the Inside Looking Out". I thoroughly enjoyed the book and it was an eye-opening read for me. To have an actual TBI patient tell about her challenges and frustrations first-hand is a perspective we do not have the chance to hear very often. What makes this account even more compelling is Dr. Osborn's experience as a medical doctor and extensive knowledge of medicine. Her medical background allows for a very insightful read as she melds objective medical knowledge with her own personal feelings and emotions. The book is a mix of Dr. Osborn's personal accounts, passages taken from her personal notebook, as well as parts of her friends' journals. Together they help tell Dr. Osborn's journey to recovery. I highly recommend this book especially brain-injured patients, their friends and family, medical professionals, and anyone who is interested in brain injuries and happens to a person when his or her brain suffers from TBI. Dr. Osborn opens with a very detailed account of a typical day in

her life. What she purposely does not do, however, is give the reader initial context which leaves us slightly puzzled about why she is very specific about certain details. Dr. Osborn writes in detail about mundane tasks that we as readers would usually do normally without thinking much about. She explains her process of waking up and the thoughts that run through her mind, the steps of taking a shower and getting dressed, and her humorous adventure to look for a place she has not yet explained. On the way to her appointment, she forgets her bus money, returns to her apartment to get the money, realizes she didn't brush her hair and is only wearing one earring, and heads out again only to get lost and realize she was hungry because she forgot to eat breakfast. To the reader, this account may seem like the story of a very forgetful, eccentric lady until Dr. Osborn explains at the end of the first chapter where she is going for her appointment - the Head Trauma Program at New York University. What Dr. Osborn does for the reader with this opening chapter is give them a feel of what it is like to suffer from traumatic brain injury. She presents the multitudes of challenges, problems, and frustrations a TBI patient may face on a typical day. She reveals the difficulties facing TBI patients in performing even simple tasks. Dr. Osborn describes the events leading up to her accident and after she awakes in the hospital. She recalls, "[...] I could see white shoes and legs sheathed in surgical scrubs moving beneath a drawn white curtain. Everything looked familiar but the perspective was wrong. This was a hospital but I was in the bed. A hospital bed. Dear God, did I fall asleep in an empty room? Overworked doctors do that sometimes." Dr. Osborn was so injured she could not comprehend what happened to her as her friend tried to explain the accident. She writes, "[My friend] told me the details, I took nothing of what she was saying - not then or the next half dozen times I asked her. Over time, I learned the story." Dr. Osborn goes on to explain her time in New York University's Head Trauma Program (HTP) which accounts for much of the book and recounts her long journey of recovery with the members of the program. In the process, she had to lose a lot of the objectiveness that she had developed and needed as a medical profession in order to recover. Essentially, she had to become the patient and instead of the doctor. Dr. Osborn writes, "[My HTP coach] had intuitively and correctly assessed that my many years of professional training had made my need for an objective demeanor second nature, even if, for the present purposes, it was an impediment." Eventually, Dr. Osborn recovers enough to return to medicine, an impressive feat of courage and perseverance. The book all in all is extremely enlightening and educational. Dr. Osborn avoids writing in heavily technical terminology, making the book very easy to read even to those outside of the medical field or those without knowledge in neuroscience. There are moments of sadness, humor, and hope throughout and I highly recommend this book to anyone who has experienced brain injury, knows someone who has brain

injury, or even potential be in contact with someone who has brain injury. The book is very hard to put down and exposes another side of brain injury we usually don't see every day. I learned a lot from reading Dr. Osborn's inspirational story and hope that other readers feel the same.

This book enables people to get the full "big picture" as to what a day in the shoes of one with a TBI suddenly forced to live a life totally different from what was pre-TBI. I gave my vision specialist that also works with healing the brain through the eyes and she told me this is the first book that gave her a much clearer look at what her clients and other individuals lives are. I love how there is the little dictionary in the back that helps express words or phrases we are saying but does not always sound clear to a caregiver, Dr. apt. and relationships. SOO much the best 10 star book.. I have a couple TBI's and I taught students with special needs and that love and compassion to do so has been stolen away from me. IT is very hard to sort of recreate a new you with pieces that have remained intact and then find new or different pieces to make a comfortable position of who and what you can do and be now. I still have days that I get real angry and sad about it and I find it odd that some times that runs deep and it feels like I just had my TBI today.

This story tells the truth about brain injury. As a mentor for TBI and Stroke survivors, I am so glad that Dr. Osborn leaves the reader with what really happens to The brain injured. The truth is that every survivor is different but no one recovers completely. They become a different person then they were and Dr. Osborn's story is told beautifully. Unlike the more famous book, " My Stroke of Insight," Dr. Osborn tells the truth. In "My Stroke of Insight" the author leaves the impression that if you work hard you can recover. All survivors can recover to a degree but not many recover without some disability. Claudia Osborn has hit a home run with "Over My Head."

The fact that Dr. Osborn was able to write a memoir of her own head injury and rehabilitation is in itself inspiring, but the true gift to the reader is her ability to blend clinical objectivity that informs and educates with the emotional rollercoaster of her tragedy and rehabilitation. I would highly recommend this book for anyone in the TBI community (patients, families, friends, caregivers) as she pulls few punches in chronicling her struggles and, despite her sobering new reality, offers an example of hope at a meaningful and rewarding life for the patient willing to let go of his or her old self and embrace a new one.

As a recovering TBI (traumatic brain injury) survivor this book has been most helpful to me. This

firsthand account of the challenges experienced and solutions found by this brave woman has helped me understand and forgive myself for disabilities I cannot control. The struggle is lightened by her description of the obstacles and her encouragement. There is little understanding or practical information for a brain injured person. This applies to professionals much less a lay person. 'If you've seen one brain injury you've seen one brain injury'. It is up to each individual to find what works for them. Claudia Osborn helps shine a light. Thank you.

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