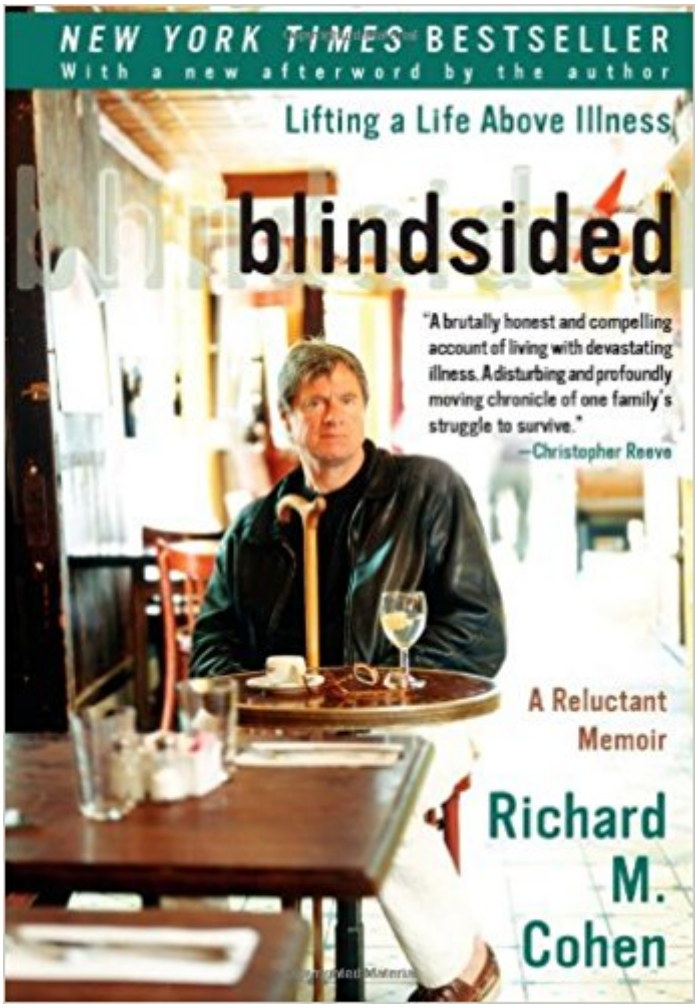
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Blindsided: Lifting A Life Above Illness: A Reluctant Memoir



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Synopsis

Richard Cohen, a veteran writer, producer and distinguished journalist, has lived with multiple sclerosis for over 25 years. Recently diagnosed again with colon cancer, Cohen describes his lifelong struggle with multiple sclerosis, his first bout with colon cancer, a loving marriage to Meredith Viera, the effect of illness on raising children, and the nature of denial and resilience, all told with grace, humour, and lyrical prose. Cohen chronicles and celebrates a life brimming over with accomplishment, adversity and personal endeavour and his story has struck a chord with readers nationÃ¢â ¬â œwide. He has been interviewed by Barbara Walters for a nearly hourÃ¢â ¬â œlong segment that ran on 20/20, he also appeared on wife Viera's program, The View and is scheduled for Charlie Rose, Larry King Live, Good Morning America, and the Paula Zahn Show, among others. Blindsided also received outstanding print attention and People magazine has run a first serial piece. Autobiographical at its roots, reportorial and expansive, Blindsided builds on Cohen's story as a task aimed at emotional wellÃ¢â ¬â œbeing, if not survival, pursued in sober tones that explore coping to its most redemptive and complex levels. Despite his extreme circumstances, Cohen's is a common struggle, recognisable as an integral part of humanity, and one which he explores with varying amounts of diligence, respect, personal revelation and humour.

Book Information

Paperback: 242 pages
Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (February 1, 2005)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0060014105
ISBN-13: 978-0060014100
Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches
Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 90 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #883,689 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÃ Â Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Cancer > Colorectal #110 inÃ Â Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Multiple Sclerosis #654 inÃ Â Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Nervous System

Customer Reviews

In this moving and engrossing memoir, veteran television news producer Richard Cohen relates a life spent dealing with multiple sclerosis, first diagnosed when he was 25 years old and just getting

started in the competitive world of broadcast journalism. As his career progressed, he struggled not only with the disease but the touchy question of how much of the truth about himself to share with colleagues and potential employers. Cohen spent much of his life running from the onset of the disease's symptoms from which his father and grandmother also suffered. Defiantly, he took challenging, sometimes extremely dangerous assignments in Lebanon, Poland, and on the domestic political campaign trail, even as his body deteriorated. But over the course of Blindsided, it becomes apparent that illness had actually built Cohen up even as it ripped him apart. Without the physical and mental toughness required to navigate a journalist's life while fighting back loss of eyesight and poor equilibrium, it's doubtful that the flaky kid we meet early in the book would transform into the award-winning professional Cohen eventually becomes. His marriage to journalist Meredith Vieira, every bit his equal as both newshound and deadpan cynical comic, gave Cohen the stable family life and children he needed when MS made it impossible to continue in a traditional news job. But two bouts with colon cancer in the late 1990s tested his resolve and his family's patience. While Cohen is both courageous and inspirational, Blindsided is not the overly sentimental clichÃƒÂ©d tale that stories about fighting illness often become. He refuses to paint himself as the hero (except when making fun of his own failure to be heroic) and recounts in detail the strain that he put on his marriage and children. Stories such as this often end with the memoirist arriving at a state of peace and mental clarity but again Cohen remains more compelling and credible by offering no such pat answers. As with most people fighting to preserve their families, their lives, and their bodies, Richard Cohen's is an ongoing struggle. --John Moe --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

In 1972, when he was 25, Cohen, an up-and-coming television journalist, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a disease for which there is no cure. In this wrenching memoir, he tells how he has for the past 30 years succeeded in his determination to "cope and to hope." For a long time, he hid his condition from friends and co-workers, taking on dangerous assignments for CBS in Poland, Lebanon and El Salvador even though his mobility and vision were impaired. He became a senior producer at CBS, and although he eventually quit the station in 1987 because he felt it was pandering to commercial and political pressures, he worked as a producer for PBS, CNN and Fox until he left TV in the late 1990s to become a writer and teacher. In spite of his illness, he also married and had three children. He nearly lost his courage in 1999 when he learned that he had colon cancer, but after two operations and the realization that despair and anger would drive his family away, he come to grips with this, too. In painful detail, he chronicles the progress of multiple

sclerosis - the increasing numbness in his hands and legs and the resultant falls, loss of vision to the point where he is now legally blind and, lately, mental confusion. Nevertheless, he writes: "These pages are not about suffering.... This book is about surviving and flourishing, rising above fear and self-doubt and, of course, anger." His wife, Meredith Vieira, a well-known television personality, has been portrayed in popular magazines as a martyr who bears a terrible burden. Cohen proves that nothing could be further from the truth. First serial rights to People magazine.Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

An unusual look at MS from a man’s perspective, but ultimately it is a memoir, not a book of advice or coping strategies. I had a hard time with the author, who doesn’t come across as someone I’d be able to stand in real life. He had so much support from his wife and, almost incredibly, was able to continue on at his workplace, yet he was too often the cause of his own difficulties. If you like hard-charging "I’m going to climb Mt. Fuji if it kills all of us" tales you might like the book. If you are more "climb Mt. Fuji ... but slowly, slowly" you will have empathy for his wife.

Excellant book! I was recommeded this book from National MS Society, I was not disappointed. yes there was alot of negative in the book concerning the symptoms and problems associated with MS, but they were all truthful. Very tough book for me to read as I’m experiencing many of the same things, and like him I had two really great jobs, that I cannot do well because of MS. And like him I’m stubborn, and still in denial after 20 years... Hopefully the folks that read this that do not have MS, realize this is frequently how all of us feel. Great read for anyone also, at any stage of MS, not sugar-coated, like some of the books I’ve read, actual fact and truth.

Not a great guide for those facing this disease, so I wouldn’t really recommend it to help them cope. Why? He chose to power through it, which is fine, except that in doing so he missed an opportunity to educate others on living well with this. Keeping employers and others in the dark seemed unfair to all concerned.

I, too, suffer from a rare, chronic, progressive neurological disease. I saw myself so clearly in these pages - the frustration, the anger, the acknowledgement of the energy it takes just to make it from day to day.This is not a "how-to-cope" book. It will take you inside the mind of a person who suffers from a disease -- severe MS in this case -- and is a journal of sorts of his battle for 25+ years. Insult

is added to injury when he develops colon cancer - twice.Cohen is marrried to television talk-show host (The View) Meredith Viera, and it’s about the dynamics of their marriage and family (three children) as much as it is about him and his illnesses. The honesty is searing and made me feel as if I were with a compatriot in a lonely war.What I have found to be of great help for myslef is developing my spiritual (different from religious) life. Cohen dismisses this avenue of help, although he talks a lot about atttitude, and I wanted to reach out to him and share the comfort I have found.I still highly recommend this book to anyone who is chronically ill, or shares a life with someone who faces that challenge.

A very moving memoir of a man who has lived with MS since the age of 25. Cohen is 60 now and still "coping" - a term and a life strategy which gets much ink here. In a discussion of this book with a friend who had already read it, he characterized it as a kind of literate good-news-bad-news-joke. God told Cohen, "The bad news is I’ve given you MS; the good news is I’m also giving you Meredith Vieira." Point taken, I suppose. But this is a story of a very difficult life lived with courage coupled with a very important and quirky sense of humor. When Cohen discovered later in life that he also had colon cancer - not once, but twice - it was nearly too much to bear. But bear it he does, and he tells you the whole messy business too, leaving very little to the imagination. He admits it was nearly a breaking point in his marriage, and also admits he was not a very nice person to be around. But his wife and kids stuck with him. This is, to put it in a nutshell, just one hell of a good book. I admire Cohen tremendously for all he has endured. But hey, he did have Meredith, so ... Great read; I recommend it highly. - Tim Bazzett, author of PINHEAD: A LOVE STORY

This man has great courage and he can turn a phrase to put it mildly. Great read. He shares his life challenges unflinchingly. He has, it seems from his description, trouble accepting himself as this new "challenged person". I know from his writing he is working on this. I believe this new person, with all of his problems, should be fully embraced for his courage, his grit, his grace under pressure. It will be difficult, but time to say farewell my friend, you stood me well...I am moving on with this new life. He may have to write this "goodbye" out and read it over and over and over and even cry over this loss, but he will achieve peace of mind. I have done this process myself and it does work. Nevermind being an athlete, etc., Richard Cohen is an extraordinary human being just as he is today. Very inspiring. I hope he writes more books.

The title says it all. Cohen was blindsided by M.S. in his 20s. Anyone with a serious chronic illness

will gain so much from this book. And, it is so well-written. It’s a great story in general -- you dont need to be ill to benefit from his inspiring story.

Richard Cohen’s unblinking account of the toll taken on his body, his mind, his emotions and his family is moving without sentimentality. He exposes his weaknesses, his struggles, his anger, and - without naming it - his courage in soldiering through it all. His writing is spare and perfect. The reader glimpses a family who has been battered by daily life with a sick and sometimes difficult husband and father, but all of them, with support and love for one another, not only endure the challenges but find strength and happiness in the journey. A short, straightforward book, it can be valuable to the fortunate and healthy (how lucky I am) and fortitude to the less fortunate (if he can overcome, so can I). Highly recommended.

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