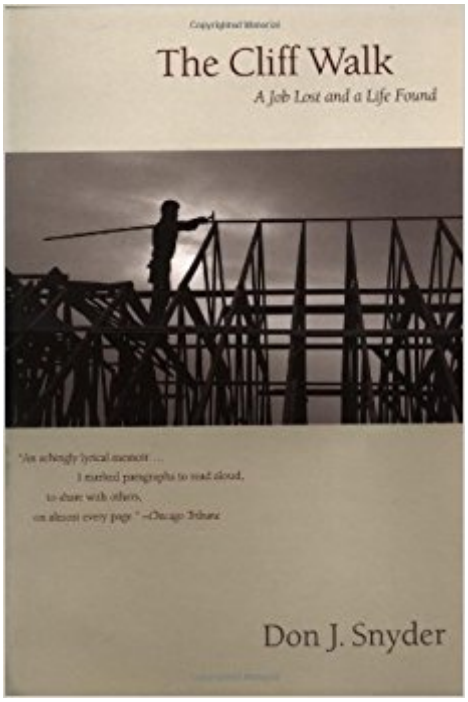
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The Cliff Walk: A Memoir Of A Job Lost And A Life Found



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Synopsis

Snyder’s account of temporarily losing his way in life presents a heartrending and inspiring memoir that "confronts the not-so-secret fear that haunts every American who works for a living" ("Atlanta Journal-Constitution"). Author pubilcity. .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don Snyder had a plum academic job, a peaceful, almost perfect life, and plans for far more success in the future. Teaching English and creative writing at Colgate University couldn’t have been more stimulating; he sought ever more work and thrived on student contact. When his contract was suddenly not renewed, Snyder was uncomprehending. Nonetheless, he responded immediately--thinking his efforts and accomplishments would pay off, as they always had in the past. Interestingly, he took some time before relaying the news to his pregnant wife, hoping that he could match the bad news with that of another appointment. After almost 100 rejection letters, Snyder found himself helping (not necessarily the word his fellow laborers probably used) to build a house in Maine, and worrying about being able to afford heavier boots. This book might have been preachy or self-indulgent. It is neither. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Snyder was a well-paid professor of English at Colgate College when, after three years of teaching, he was not granted tenure due to downsizing and lost his job. At the beginning, Snyder was

confident he would land another position quickly, but after months that turned into years of searching, he was nearly broke. He describes how being rejected from 90 jobs was emotionally and psychologically difficult; not finding work as a well-educated, middle-class person was a humiliating and devastating experience as well as a great financial burden. After failing at everything he was trained in life to do, he settled for a job as an unskilled construction worker to support his family. Through this fascinating, well-written book, Snyder rediscovers his values and priorities; he finds that happiness is not always defined by academic success. An articulate memoir narrated by Alan Sklar; recommended for all libraries.ACarol Stern, CUNY at Queens Coll. Graduate Program Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The absolute best cautionary tale I have ever read. Don Snyder’s fantastic surreal account of his pursuit of the "American Dream" in our present chaotic economy is a contemporary " American Tragedy". Words to heed; one has to have multi & various job skill sets to keep one’s family afloat in such vicissitudes.A Chinese curse, May you live in interesting times strikes home. This is not the society we were raised in, " The Salad Days" after WW2.

Good book. Was recommended to me by my sister and brother-in-law.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Don Snyder’s account of his venture into and out of academia. I could relate to many of the feelings he had because of the similarities of our experiences. But it seemed that he has taken so much literary license that it is a little of a self serving memoir... but perhaps they all are.I taught at Colgate University, apparently for the two years just before he arrived (on a 2 year contract). I will not claim, as some have, that Colgate did not mistreat or mislead him. I really do not know. But, I will point out that his portrayal of Colgate as an ideal place to hold a faculty position and as "one notch below the Ivy league" is a little generous. Hamilton, NY. is only a great place to live if you like virtually perpetual cold gray weather in an isolated hamlet with very little cultural or other amenities (outside of the mostly amateur or excessively scholarly offerings of a small college’s students and faculty). The students at Colgate tended to be spoiled rich kids who wanted to go to an Ivy league school, but were not academically equipped to do so. Of course there were notable exceptions... those particularly talented and bright students that make teaching a joy. There are at least some of these at every school. And the faculty... He should be happy not to be stuck there. The school’s long term tenured faculty tend to be there precisely because they are not

able to go somewhere else. There is a gilded cage feeling about their lives. It shows in their bitterness with administrators, students, and each other. They would fight over very small things because they had no control over the big things in their lives. Generally I would have to say that the over-all quality of the faculty was not one notch below Ivy League, but one notch below that at a typical large public state university. Colgate regularly used 2-year contracts (instead of tenure track contracts) apparently to keep down faculty costs. Snyder was a little unclear about the nature of his contract. If it was a tenure track contract, everyone (in academia) knows that to be turned down at a third year review is an indication that the institution does not think you are doing well enough to be tenured at that institution, whatever they may "say" to soften the blow. An institution as small as Colgate would not typically hire a faculty member into a tenure track slot if it was a too heavily tenured department. It would use short term contracts, which are particularly easy to fill in English departments. So if Synder had a tenure track position, then he has not told us the whole story. There would be some written or verbal report or analysis from his colleagues judging the quality and quantity of his academic work, his teaching skills, his collegiality (how well they liked him and got along with him), and service. We hear nothing of this; he leaves us very much in the dark about the details of his dismissal. There must be more. By leaving this out, we are also shut out from the sense of outrage and/or self-doubt that such an analysis provokes. Perhaps this is what he could not tell his wife and couldn't tell us either... perhaps it just hurt too much to review it, even if he thought it was not a fair and accurate analysis. It is interesting, though to spot some of the little ways in which I do concur with his analysis. His portrayal of the Economics Professor, whom he only names by initials, was right on the mark. I knew immediately to whom he was referring. In the end, however, I found myself not liking Don Snyder very much. By neglect, at least, he mistreats his wife and children. He claims to have tried to "sell" one of his unborn children. We are supposed to think that this is because he has sunk so low. But, I think, he is just lacking in character and it took him a while to decide to be a better person. He correctly notes that he is not the only one to face career setbacks, disappointments and even prolonged unemployment, but he did portray perhaps one of the worst ways to react to such a difficulty. Not liking the person, Don Synder, however, does not mean that I did not like the book. It held my attention from beginning to end, and while I could not relate to the actions taken, I could relate to the emotions expressed as genuine.

Snyder articulates what many of us know inside but are afraid to face. Joe Sixpack knows and lives this truth everyday. Many of the fakes, frauds, and phoney baloneys in suits and ties assume their easy living is granted and expected. My wife and I are both in education and my humble and limited

experience confirms much of what Snyder says. Peter Brimelow in Forbes magazine noted that 9% of all Ph.D.s in subjects like English and political science are unemployed. With those kinds of numbers no wonder Snyder was cut. If he worked as hard as he says, and the students loved his teaching methods then he embarrased his peers. It is usually the good guys who get cut and the pressed and polished know nothings who get promoted. Snyder has learned a hard lesson. In reading the book there is much left unsaid. Maybe he will fill in the missing spots and treat us with a follow-up on his progress as he adjusts with his new found life. What happened to him is going to happen to me one day, when it does I will be better prepared and will see life in a whole new way. END

This is about the hard-hitting reality of losing a job you love and not ever being able to get back into the field ever again no matter how hard you try. Overall the writing was well-done and it was interesting, but I was hoping to feel more enlightened about how to reconcile this type of life experience. However, the writer conveys the sense that part of his identity was lost with the teaching job, and though he did learn the benefits of a different kind of life, he still seemed broken in some ways at the end of the story. I was hoping the ending would be more uplifting. But overall, good writing and very interesting.

While it started out interesting and bringing the reader into his life of hurdles, I ended up feeling he was too self absorbed to be an inspiration.

Great Read!

This is a truly inspirational true life story and is the third copy I have bought. One for myself and two as gifts. It’s great for both men and women, especially those struggling with major life changes, particularly in their careers. If you had more stars, I’d click on them.

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