

From There to Here: Stories of Adjustment to Spinal Cord Injury

Gary Karp, Editor

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"Two years ago, I wrote a three-hundred-and-fifty-page doctoral dissertation," said Daniel Gottlieb. "How can I be proud of turning a page?" A psychologist with a spinal cord injury, Gottlieb found that praise for his progress in rehab seemed meaningless. He is one of forty-five survivors of spinal cord injury who each contributed a personal essay to this book.

The essays typically start with "there"—the recent injury experience. They move through the early struggle to cope, and end with "here"—living a fulfilling life. The essayists share their fears, anger, and deep despair, as well as their joy. All have succeeded in living productive lives; the vast majority are gainfully employed.

The editors have experience from the trenches to share: Karp, whose essay is included, has been living with a spinal cord injury for thirty-one years. He has written articles for *New Mobility* and for disability web sites, as well as a column for the *National Spinal Cord Injury Association* and two books: *Life on Wheels: For the Active Wheelchair User* and *Choosing a Wheelchair: A Guide for Optimal Independence*. Klein, a clinical psychologist, has worked with clients with disabilities, especially children, for many years. Co-founder of *Exceptional Parent Magazine*, he has written extensively on disability issues, and has co-edited *Reflections from a Different Journey: What Adults with Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew* and *You Will Dream New Dreams: Inspiring Personal Stories by Parents of Children with Disabilities*.

At age fourteen, essayist Erin Cornman feared remaining severely dependent after breaking her back. Contrary to her early expectations, she is enjoying her junior year in high school and keeping busy with numerous activities, including tutoring children.

Kris Gulden felt inadequate upon comparing herself with spinal-cord-injury survivors who raise children or attend law school. She wrote: "I have to remind myself that each of us is on an individual journey—I am okay the way I am." She makes presentations about disability and holds a part-time job as a sales representative.

This book will provide support and inspiration for survivors of spinal cord injury, their families, and their friends. Readers will easily identify with at least some of the wide variety of individuals represented in these essays. The inclusion of intimate details contributes to the book's practicality.

Gottlieb still mourns the loss of an able body, but he has made great progress since relearning to turn pages. A cure is not among his expectations, but if one materializes, he will go for the treatment when he can work it into his busy schedule as a family therapist, radio-show host, and newspaper columnist.

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