

Book Review

When I was asked to review Debbie Petrina's new book, *MANAGING MS: STRAIGHT TALK FROM A THIRTY-ONE-ONE YEAR SURVIVOR*, I had to chuckle. I too have lived with this illness just as long and didn't think it was possible to learn anything new.

Boy, was I wrong. This small, easy to read book is a wealth of matter-of- fact information interspersed with her memories that add credibility. I learned more about spasticity here than I knew and also the word 'clonus' that describes exactly what my weaker leg does sometimes. She adds practical tips for dealing with so many of the symptoms, and side effects of medications. The chapters are broken down into advice for the newly diagnosed, symptoms, grieving, heat, and what you can do about the variety of problems that come with MS. There are chapters about dealing with people (and how they deal with us) as well as what she calls the elephant in the closet - *suicide*.

She also makes it clear that it is the person with MS that is in charge of all decision-making, not the doctors. The doctors are there to give all the information needed for decision-making. She explains clearly why and how she made difficult decisions for her and her family and how it has worked out all for the best. She strongly encourages everyone to do the same. This is an empowering book that doesn't sugar coat anything but makes the endless details manageable - from her 31-one years of experience. I felt like I was learning from an old friend over a cup of tea.

This should be required reading for doctors, health professionals, MS patients and their families.

-Sharon Baldacci,

Author of A SUND OG MOMENT

(June 21, 2012)