

If I Only Had a Brain Injury

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (4/08)

In 1998, Laura Bruno was in a car accident that left her with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). She was 24-years-old at the time and working on her graduate school fellowship. The damage caused to her brain forced her to put her education and career on hold, while focusing on her recovery. "If I Only Had a Brain Injury" tells Laura's story of learning to overcome her disability. Along the way, she discovered that what she learned to help herself can also help others who are dealing with illnesses that affect their sense of self. These illnesses include: chronic fatigue, brain cancer, fibromyalgia, vertigo, candida overgrowth, concussion, Lyme disease, migraines and other "Medical Mystery." Six years after her accident, her husband was stricken with a mysterious disabling illness that turned out to be Lyme Disease.

Laura compares her story to Dorothy's in "The Wizard of Oz," because Dorothy's journey begins when she has a concussion and continues on as she tries to find her way home. Her experience in having a TBI and her background in life coaching, medical intuition, Reiki and writing provide her with the tools to write a heartfelt, yet informative guide to healing and recovery. "If I Only Had a Brain Injury" inspires both individuals who are experiencing illness and their care providers to look for the positives in their healing experience.

There is a wealth of information provided in this book in a manner that is interesting and easy to understand. In addition to telling her story, Laura also offers healing hints, appendices with essays and interviews with people who are involved in the healing process. She also offers networking and contact information. This also includes book recommendations and websites. I couldn't find anything lacking.

As both someone with fibromyalgia and a person that works with individuals with disabilities, I found that I gained a lot of insight into both my illness and those of people that I work with on a daily basis. The day after I read this book, a woman came into my classroom with a TBI. It was wonderful to have just learned about the issues that she is dealing with. I felt that I could be more empathetic to her situation and having that understanding also gave me a better idea of how I can help meet her needs in my program. The effects of her TBI are different from most of my students with TBI, and more similar to the author's. If I had not had this information, I might have assumed that I was dealing more with a mental health issue. Her speech was very clear, yet her words were mixed up. I am so grateful that I read this book first.

I highly recommend "If I Only Had a Brain Injury" to individuals who are experiencing illnesses that affect their sense of self and to their care providers. Everything that they could possibly need to help them take positive action towards their recovery is contained within these pages.