

Something for Everybody

Dugan, M. (2003). *Living with Hearing Loss* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press. 177 pages. Paperback. \$11.95.

Every now and then, a reliable, accessible, accurate book on selected important issues in deafness appears in print. *Living with Hearing Loss* by Marcia Dugan is such a book. It is clear that the author wrote “for the consumer with the mind and heart of a consumer. Well organized, easy to read, and eminently practical, she covers all the bases . . .” (pp. ix–x). At first blush, it seems that this book is specifically for older adults, who—I learned—may wait as long as five to seven years before seeking assistance for their hearing difficulties. However, the consumer is actually a broad-based entity; this book has important information for parents, teachers, and professionals interested in deafness. There is indeed something for everybody.

There are 42 chapters, many of them just a few pages in length. The book also contains a glossary and appendices, one of which provides information resources on hearing loss. There are few text citations, probably because the author felt that this interferes with accessibility. I would have preferred the use of citations that support many of the statements in the book.

There are several themes around which the chapters are organized. The first few chapters cover the concept of hearing loss and its affects on family and friends. The next few chapters focus on the anatomy and physiology of the ear and the various effects of medication on hearing. Considerable space is devoted to hearing aids, with one chapter on cochlear implants. Other topics include speech reading, oral interpreting, legal rights, effects on hearing in various places, use of the Internet, assistive devices, and psychosocial effects of hearing loss. There is even a brief chapter on SHHH (Self-Help for the Hard of Hearing), for which the author served as a national board member and president.

For many professionals in the field of deafness, none of the information is new. Nevertheless, it is gratifying to read some of the author’s remarks. For

example, she debunks myths associated with hearing loss and the use of amplification systems. Her style is so positive, assertive, and encouraging that I started to feel guilty for all the times that I have faked my hearing loss in past social situations. Even experienced professionals may learn new information, especially about the effects of certain medications on hearing and the interesting concept of tinnitus (noises in the ear) and its treatment. There are tips for improving communication and signs for recognizing a hearing loss that would be useful information for general education classroom teachers.

In essence, there is a wealth of accessible information in this little book. If readers desire additional or more in-depth information, they can contact the respective organizations in the appendix on resources. I think it would have been better to add a suggested reading list at the end of each major theme (i.e., after several chapters). Nevertheless, this is a good, practical book, and I promise the author that I will not fake my hearing loss again.

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