
It’s not very often that a librarian’s book achieves this. It’s been read and recommended by Oprah. The Huffington Post declared it one of the ten most anticipated books of 2013. Josh is doing a grueling national book tour with bookstore, conference, television and radio appearances. Indeed, there have been glowing reviews everywhere, including the esteemed New Yorker magazine and New York Times. Yes, this is a special, unique and unusual memoir.

I’ve been a librarian for thirty-six years and I’ve seen some great librarians who’ve overcome adversity in life and scholarship. For example, my friend Joan completed library school in the same amount of time as I did with higher marks despite being sightless. My life struggles with bullying and cancer pale next to her achievements. However, the world at large is much more forgiving of blindness than of people with Tourette’s Syndrome. They rarely get the same understanding and social acceptance. Josh is in every way a true inspiration. That’s an overused word when talking about Josh, but it just fits perfectly. He lives a full life, manages to be a great husband and father, carries on a progressive career as a respected professional and succeeds personally, socially and professionally. More importantly, he shares. His positivity is radioactive. The magic is in his lack of ego. He’s physically stronger than anyone I know and has a body that any guy would love to have, yet remains humble and deferential. He’s approachable, and library users love him. I know they talk about the gentle giant in Salt Lake City Public Library. He’s thoughtful and shares his insights and his struggles without vanity or worry. Everyone can learn a lot from Josh’s story and be truly inspired. I follow his blog, wall postings, tweets, newsletter and e-mails, and I eagerly anticipated this book. I can’t wait to see Josh on Leno, Letterman, Rosie, Oprah, Ellen, Stewart and Colbert. They’ll be floored! The world needs more Josh.

This is an unvarnished memoir – captivating in its honesty and transparency. Each chapter begins with a modern day personal library anecdote. Each anecdote begins with a call number from the Dewey system that ties in thematically. After the library opening of each chapter, Josh relates it back to an appropriate point in his life to tell his memoir:

- Boy has Tourette’s Syndrome which manifests itself at age six.
- At that point, with loving parents, it’s nothing more than a nuisance.
- Tourette’s gets worse as a freshman in high school; diagnosis ensues.
- Gets *way worse* at age twenty during a Latter-day Saints (LDS) Mission.
- A crisis of faith ensues that involves introspection and interesting choices.
- Josh ‘suffers’ years of Tourette’s related hernias, dislocations, broken teeth, and more verging on social and physical disability.
- Josh applies to work at library after years of being unable to function, just to see if he can hack the quiet, nerdy atmosphere – to see if he has actually turned a corner.
• It proves to be a match made in heaven, but that underrates the experience as mere cliché.
• Josh meets a performing strongman with autism, a highly-decorated Air Force tech sergeant, who helps him come up with a plan to "cure" it.
• It actually works! Mostly.
• Josh marries and struggles to have a child.
• His son starts having tics when he is two and a half, and he again struggles with trying to figure out if any of his experiences and solutions will be solutions for him. He now serves as role model for other Tourettics.

The above is the grossest simplification. The arc of the memoir doesn’t tell you the real learning and understanding and adventure of Josh’s life. Ultimately, it’s a book about questions, about knowing things versus feeling things, and being able to recognize the times when simply feeling things is enough to go on. Indeed, you get inside his mind, and a fascinating mind it is. You also meet the people he’s met, and fall in love and are full of admiration for his family and library. His introspective humour is positively addictive.

Despite being tied to struggles with Tourette’s, growing as person, growing as a weightlifter, and spirituality, Josh’s story is everyone’s story about struggling to become the fully realized person they want to be. As librarians we struggle with our ethic to make a positive difference in people’s lives with books and more. Josh shares his life in books and the ongoing struggles in his mind to become the person he wants to be. Like all of us, it takes longer than he wants, but his journey is infinitely more important than the destination, and the people we touch and who touch us are part of Josh’s story here. Josh has a unique voice in sharing, as openly as is probably possible, the internal emotional life of a man growing up and finding his passions for reading, family, libraries, and making a difference – all while struggling with seemingly insurmountable challenges offered by society, religion, disability, and his own self-image. It is rare for a man to share his development and struggles, and Josh’s special struggles to deal with his own doubts, Tourette’s and society give his journey a patina of honesty, resilience, and a flavour of humanity that truly inspires and educates. Josh has a unique voice, and I was privileged to read and be empowered by his story.

As a librarian, you’ll recognize the experiences he shares from his work life and making it through his graduate library education. You will identify with the internal conflicts he faces in dealing with the public. You’ll be enlightened as well as challenged. You’ll never look at a patron with tics or Tourette’s the same way again. This book doesn’t sugarcoat library service. It’s a warts and all memoir. I won’t spoil the stories for you but, suffice it to say, they’re universal for public librarians.

I highly recommend that you take a chance on reading this book. I devoured it quickly as a reader of an ARC (advance reader copy) before publication and still bought a hard copy of the final version just to have it.

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