

Book Title: Don't Think About Monkeys

Edited by: Adam Ward and John S. Hilkevich

Publisher: Hope Press

Year: 1992

ISBN #: 1-878267-33-7

Type: Nonfiction/Autobiography

Book Review by Patricia Hins

Graduate Student

Minnesota State University Moorhead

plhins@hotmail.com

Don't Think About Monkeys takes the reader on an eye-opening journey into the worlds of people living with Tourette Syndrome (TS). In their personal accounts, 15 people with TS share their struggles, frustrations, and victories. Although many share similar symptoms, no two are alike. In addition to the challenging physical symptoms they must live with constantly, the writers share their difficulties in obtaining a diagnosis, their experiences of being teased and harassed at school, family misunderstandings, and later, discrimination by employers. Their attempts to find ways to accept their disorder, develop self-esteem, and find purpose and direction for their lives led them down many different roads. In sharing their journeys with the reader, they offer hope and advice to others living with Tourette's.

The editors have chosen stories representing a wide range of the population of people with TS. People with TS wrote most of the selections, but some of the authors are family members who share the struggle with their spouse or children or both. The accounts are brief and can be read in one short sitting. They are enlightening, heart wrenching, and uplifting. They will remain etched on the reader's mind for a long time.

As I progressed through this book, I became more aware of, and therefore, more sensitive to the many related problems faced by people as a result of their symptoms. As I read about the seemingly endless variety of tics, I began to think what it would be like to constantly try to keep them under control, or how difficult it would be to get any sleep. I realized the courage it would take to participate in a social situation knowing that at any moment some inappropriate, involuntary, and embarrassing words could escape from my mouth. My eyes were opened to the severity and variety of behaviors associated with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and I was appalled at how it can destroy the lives of those who have it. I came to believe that TS was one of the most horrific disorders in the world. But wait! Many of the writers stated that once they accepted their syndrome, they would not choose to live without it because they feel that it is a part of them. According to them, living with Tourette's helped them become sensitive, creative, and diverse people.

This book is an inspiration for those who have Tourette Syndrome, those who live with them, and those who teach them.