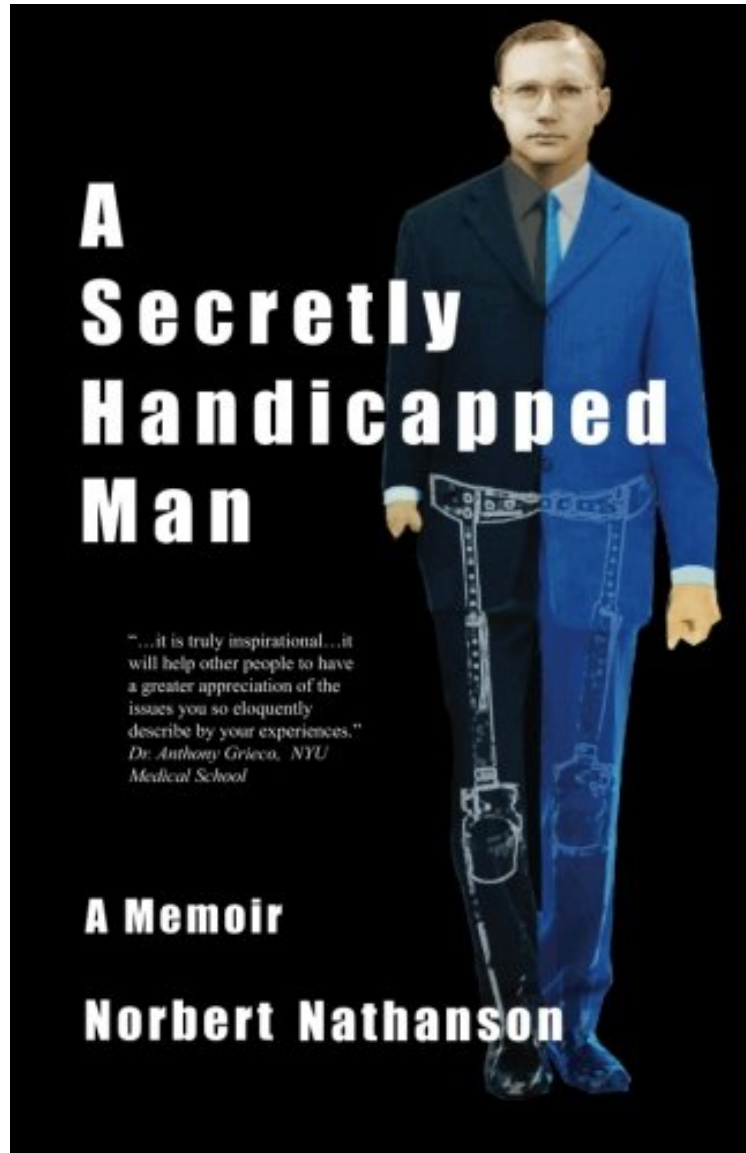


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A Secretly Handicapped Man: A Memoir

Norbert Nathanson

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#2655612 in Books Norbert Nathanson 2013-07-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .85 x 5.50l, .96
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Norbert Nathanson : A Secretly Handicapped Man: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Secretly Handicapped Man: A Memoir:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A Secretly Handicapped Man - an outstanding memoir of a difficult life and a positive outcome. By R. Rathke Growing up as Norb Nathanson's next door neighbor in Pittsburgh, and watching his accomplishments during the early years of WQED-TV, I can relate to his descriptions of the Spring Hill neighborhood and the people who interacted with him in that era. But more important, I understood why he

introduced these early incidents in telling the story of a lifetime of challenges and successes. Throughout the book he describes his mother and dad's unflinching support in some very difficult times, and I found myself thinking, "What wonderful parents". Then, near the end of the book Norb writes some very emotional words saying just that. The book is very compelling and quite inspirational. And, oh yes, it is very well written. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A well written, inspiring story

By Buzz Rice This is the inspiring story of a man born with just one hand and no feet who struggled to overcome the physical pain and social stigma of his disabilities. Wading into a cold mountain stream fishing for trout, piloting his sailboat up the Atlantic coast, or scripting and directing the television production of St. Louis Mid America Jubilee, he never accepted the judgment of others that he was crippled, impaired or disabled. There are not many who would decide to have their legs amputated to significantly improve their lives. This was the choice the author made, and it was transformative. Fitted with prosthetic legs he was now normal height, walked with a normal gait, and with long pants could keep his disability a secret. After thirty-four years of pain standing and walking, stares, epithets and social rejection, he appeared normal. With the right arm of his jacket altered, and with the skills of a magician, he was able to distract others gaze from the missing right hand. He was now able to marry, have children and pursue a professional career in education and television as the bread winner for his family. Although his work life was always precarious, he was able to achieve his own version of the American dream. It is a remarkable story of courage, resilience, discipline, intelligence and skill.

This is a well written, well edited book, and in telling his story the author gives the reader an insiders view of the gauntlet our society has erected for those with disabilities. Post World War II America was a time of upward mobility when the working class could earn a decent living and their sons and daughters could go to college and move into the middle class. However, people with disabilities were often excluded from the workforce, and regardless of their talents they had to struggle to get and keep a job. Employers felt fully justified in not hiring disabled persons because... they had a disability. It was also a time of social change and movements for the civil rights of women, minorities, the elderly and poor. It wasn't until 1990, however, that Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. As the author points out part of the problem was that the community of disabled was divided into separate groups each fighting for the rights of those with a particular disability; the deaf, blind, multiple amputees, etc.

Nathanson did not feel it safe to reveal his secret that he was a triple amputee until late in his career. He finally accepted the role of moderator for a series of television programs he produced about the disabled. He did not write this memoir for others, but for his children who had kept the family's secret. The fight for the civil rights of the disabled is not yet won. There is a message here for all of us: we need to be inclusive. We are all in this together: white, black or brown; Christian, Jew or Muslim; old, young or middle aged, working, middle or wealthy class; husband, wife or partner, politically left, right or center; and yes, physically fit or physically handicapped. The strength of America is the diversity of its people.

Stat Rice 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great Memoir

By Judith A. DeWitt A SECRETLY HANDICAPPED MANA MEMOIR BY NORBERT NATHANSON It is not often that we are given the privilege and opportunity to learn about the life of a man who was born with some challenges that could have had a much more restrictive impact on his life than they did. In this book we are given the opportunity to see how this man and his family dealt with his handicaps. Norbert tells us in a very readable way what it was like for him growing up and some of the issues that he has faced at all stages of his life. We see how his parents were able to support him and make his world as normal as possible and we also see how his own determination and persistence helped him to pursue the goals that he set for himself. We have an opportunity to understand how the issue of secrets can affect the lives of all family members and how difficult it is for people who are different to be accepted for their abilities. A question that comes to mind while reading this book is how much did other people's perception of his abilities and talents affect his own perceptions of himself. How much more difficult did this make it for him to accomplish all the things that he did? This book should be a must read for all of us to help us understand what it is like for people who are different and especially for the ones of us that have friends and clients who face some of the challenges that Norbert had. Judy DeWitt, MSW, ACSW

After more than 30 years weathering stares and severe public and professional stigma, growing up in the working class of Depression Era Pittsburgh, and trying desperately to enter the new burgeoning field of television, the author experienced a miracle. Born without feet or one hand, new advances in medical science provided artificial legs which gave him a normal height, a natural appearance and gait, and permitted him to enjoy a previously unknown, life altering public anonymity. Being out of the spotlight of public stigma brought him peace. He never shared his story, and held his secrets fiercely. He has never seen himself as being different, nor defined himself in dramatic terms. An experienced, serious and driven educator and television executive, outdoorsman, sailor, carpenter, fisherman, he has formed his reality. His survival is a triumph, his life a victory. He doesn't understand that his accomplishments are remarkable. It is truly inspirational. It will help other people to have a greater appreciation of the issues you so eloquently describe by your experiences. Dr. Anthony Grieco, NYU Medical School

The book provides any reader, casual or otherwise, deep insights into the life of a person born very different physically and later transformed into yet another physical being. That makes the story unique, in a class of its own. I come away from it with a much deeper

understanding of the impact of handicapping conditions on a persons development. Not a tear or moment of heartache is left out. What this man went through in his rise above adversity is inspirational in every respect. Don Ferguson, Dean Emeritus, School of Education, New Mexico State University "What I so admire is the lack of self pity. It is one painful step forward after another, instead of railing at the world. The author gives us a metaphor for many people's life. And the memoir holds a happy ending after all the difficult decisions he had to make." Diane H. Schetky, M.D., retired psychiatrist and poet.

About the Author In the space of seventy years I was variously labeled as crippled, deformed, handicapped and disabled, more recently as a person with disabilities, and currently as physically challenged. The evolving choice of epithets traces the gradual changes in societal perceptions, but all these terms have a common theme; they designate someone who is different." Norbert Nathanson, Northport, ME