



Deaf Like Me

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Deaf Like Me is the moving account of parents coming to terms with their baby girl's profound deafness. The love, hope, and anxieties of all hearing parents of deaf children are expressed here with power and simplicity. In the epilogue, Lynn Spradley as a teenager reflects upon being deaf, her education, her struggle to communicate, and the discovery that she was the focus of her father's and uncle's book. At once moving and inspiring, Deaf Like Me is must reading for every parent, relative, and friend of deaf children everywhere.

Deaf Like Me Details

Date : Published January 1st 1985 by Gallaudet University Press (first published March 12th 1978)

ISBN : 9780930323110

Author : Thomas S. Spradley , James P. Spradley

Format : Paperback 285 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Biography

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From Reader Review Deaf Like Me for online ebook

Christy Bacon says

Deaf Like Me was a rollercoaster of a book in all of the right ways. I found myself laughing, crying, hoping, and praying for this girl I have never met and that is so deserving of love and a language to share it through.

I absolutely love this book.

Matt says

An almost absurdly straight-forward memoir of a family with a deaf daughter-- this is full of interesting insight and answers all those questions I never knew to ask-- never even thought there were questions to ask-- about being deaf, growing up deaf and needing to be educated in a reasonably modern school system. This is no Helen Keller story, but it's still pretty shocking. And Spradley and this story are in the middle of what feels like a huge turning point in deaf history, addressing directly the causes and results of the focus on "oral culture," the idea that deaf students could learn to speak even if they couldn't hear. Of course that's kind of crazy, when you think about it, but who would? And the idea is given a decent amount of play here, before we get to the reversal, three quarters of the book through, when sign language appears.

It's a lot like a conversion story, in terms of its structure and the way it tries to persuade us. And it's also so direct that it has an artless feel, even though it's in the shape of a narrative. It does read well, but you never forget that the art of this is secondary to the main ideas it wants to communicate. And that means that there are weird moments here, like the emphasis on the animal nature of deaf people trying to use oral language-- this recurs often, and is especially poignant and awkward when it comes up at the end, in a scene in Vegas when a kid is trapped in this animal life because his parents won't let him sign. It's weird, I'll say that.

The title gets explained in the text of the book-- it's something the deaf daughter of the narrator says when she realizes other people are like her-- but for me at least, the shadow of "Black Like Me" hung over this book, in a not-pleasant way.

Olivia says

This was a RS book club reading assignment. It was written by a father of a deaf child and tells of the struggles of his family as they learned to communicate with their deaf child. This book describes the communication debate between oralism and sign language. After reading this book, you will wonder why anybody would withhold sign language education from a deaf child. The sacrifice and love shown by this family for their deaf child is very touching and sweet.

Jamie Brooks says

I had to read this as an assignment for my ASL 2 class. Usually I hate books that I am forced to read, but I

enjoyed this one. It sent me on a emotional rollercoaster. Mainly because the parents spend 3/4 of the book being completely against sign language and forcing their very young daughter to attempt to learn how to lip read and speak when it is very difficult for people who are deaf from birth to do.

Even though that pissed me off, I understood that the parents weren't at fault. They had never dealt with something like that before and they were just trying their best. The ending was a nice happy ending so I guess that made up for it haha. Very good book. I highly recommend it to people who want a little peek into deaf culture and the struggles deaf people go through.

James says

I immensely enjoyed this book. Having worked in deaf education , I believe this should be a required read for all teachers or others training to work with the deaf.

Katie Rose Sorensen says

Read for my ASL 101 class.

I was so frustrated for the first 9/10ths of the book because all the parents were being told was "don't use gestures with your deaf child" and other ridiculous advice. And every 5 pages the author (dad) would say "We just knew that someday she'd talk." I wanted to shout at him, HELLO, she's DEAF! You're expecting her to function as if she was hearing, when she's NOT hearing!

But I guess my frustration was part of the point - that it's ridiculous to expect a deaf child to function like a hearing child. I hope this book helped to break some of the beliefs that if deaf people communicate in ASL then they're somehow "less." I was so happy at the end when they finally started teaching Lynn sign language and she gained a voice. I admire Lynn's parents for doing their research to figure out what was best for their daughter, and I'm glad that they choose to teach Lynn sign language and gave her a voice!

(The copy I read didn't have the epilogue by Lynn - I need to find more recently published copy to read that!)

Karen says

This is an inspiring account of hearing parents trying to do their best for their young daughter, Lynn, one of 20,000 babies born deaf due to the rubella epidemic of 1963-64. Wisdom of the time instructed parents to not let their child "act deaf" (lest she grow up to become a member of the "deaf ghetto") but instead to immerse her in lip-reading and speech. The predominant axiom was, "All deaf children can learn to lip-read and talk almost as well as their hearing peers if given an early start and a pure oral environment." A pure oral environment meant no sign language, ever.

The memoir traces Lynn's progress -- or, more accurately, her devolution -- from a bright child with a sunny disposition to, a few years later, a frustrated and emotionally/intellectually stalled preschooler. It's amazing to read how diligently the parents work with Lynn, believing that (as they're told) if they talk at her and fill her with enough words, someday the words will come pouring out in articulate speech.

About three-quarters of the way through the book, Lynn's parents start getting intimations that there may be another way. A few open-minded parents at the oralist deaf school that Lynn attends are pushing to

incorporate some signing in the classroom. This is during the late 1960s when American Sign Language is reviving after 60 years of suppression.

The bulk of the book is amazing due to the parents' obvious love for and dedication to their daughter. The last bit of the book showcases Lynn's incredible blossoming as ASL unlocks her ability to finally communicate her needs, desires, and complex thoughts.

Kate says

This book should be required reading for any hearing parents who have a profoundly deaf child. Even forty years later, there is a lot of misinformation out there about education for deaf children, sign language, and how to communicate with your deaf child. I found this story profoundly moving. Louise and Tom's struggles with their daughter, trying to teach her to talk, and in the process never being able to communicate with her broke my heart. The instant they started using sign language, the instant Lynn finally understood that she had a name, that she could communicate with her parents, I started crying and didn't stop until the end of the book. I'm so glad that Tom & Jim Spradley wrote this book so that others could learn from their experiences.

Think about this - remember back when you first tried to learn a foreign language. Now think about trying to do it if you could never hear the language being spoken. Now think about trying to do it if you could never hear your own voice. That's what learning English is like for a profoundly deaf child. Amazing.

Simin Yadegar says

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Natelle Woodworth says

Wow. A MUST READ!!! This book is absolutely breathtaking. I was so frustrated at times but the ending is magnificent. To read this story and hear the frustrations that Lynn's parents go through and struggle with is heartbreaking. I can't even imagine how hard it must of been for them back in the 60's to struggle with the controversy of Oralism vs Manual Language (ASL) I found myself wanting to jump through the book and shake them and snap my fingers and tell them to wake up that they need to teach Lynn sign language that way she can communicate with them. Society back then was still on the fence about ASL and boy did I get angry!

This book goes inside Thomas Spradley's mind and shows true emotions that parents struggle with when having a deaf child whom they can't communicate with. Their perseverance is amazing and the fact that they cared so much was refreshing, whereas a lot of parents would give up!

I highly recommend this book to everyone because it shows a glimpse into the deaf community that most "hearing" people know nothing about.

Hannah says

Though the majority of the books dwelt on the struggles and frustrations that the family of a deaf girl faced, rather than the identity of Lynn as Deaf, the message was powerful, and the ending, moving.

Kassie says

this is a nonfiction book about Thomas Spradley and his family's struggles as they learn how to raise their Deaf child, Lynn. I found this story frustrating, heartwarming, and in the end beautiful. last 4th or so made me tear up a few times.

Nicholas Beck says

There were many things from this book that I really liked. Including the descriptions of the depths of difficulties that parents of deaf children have to endure to teach their child. Especially around the time this book is centered when a lot less was known about deaf people. The parents in the book were incredibly patient and persistence is finding a way to teach their daughter how to communicate. Even through all the unbelievably challenging times of frustration at not being able to get the message across to their daughter, and the daughter not being able to explain what she needed from the parents. There were a lot of things that I learned about the deaf community from this book and would consider reading it again.

Natalie Guerrero says

Very good nonfiction book! The outline of how the professionals who are pure oralists not only give false hopes, but also deny a child communication skills is heartbreakingly at best. I found it very interesting to read this family's experiences with the professionals they encountered. I have heard of the pure oral method (I learned a lot about ASL and deaf culture in college), but had never read actual accounts of its implementation.

The negative propaganda regarding sign language is appalling. I really don't get how anyone could think that sign language could not lead to meaningful communication and a more successful/happy individual. I mean I sort of get it (the seemingly ignorant side of the argument--I just assume that they really don't understand the truth).

I'm not at all up to date on the current state of oralism vs sign language, but I certainly hope that society as a whole has progressed enough that both are able to be used in any deaf education setting.

Anway, I thought this author did a good job with telling his story. It was interesting and enlightening. Though, if I had any complaint it would be more details about when they begin using sign language. The book can be a bit frustrating since the majority of it consists of frustrating situations.

Sarah says

This book is non-fiction account of a family with a deaf daughter. Their daughter, Lynn, is born in the 1960's at a time when deafness was not widely understood. The culturally and socially acceptable method of dealing with this so-called disability was the oral method which involves teaching deaf children to speak through hours of careful instruction and practice of lip reading, controlling air flow, making sounds from the diaphragm, etc. Lynn's parents, Tom and Louise Spradley go through a heartwrenching struggle as they try to teach their daughter to communicate. The oral method proves to be unsuccessful for them and Lynn only learns five words in three years; meanwhile her behavior becomes worse as she gets older and experiences the frustration of not being able to communicate. The light at the end of the tunnel finally comes when the Spradley's discover ASL. This is an amazing story and although the beginning and middle get a bit repetitive, the end is well worth it! No questionable content or language here. Two thumbs way up.
