Book Review

MY STROKE OF INSIGHT: A BRAIN SCIENTIST'S PERSONAL JOURNEY

by Jill Bolte Taylor, 224 pp., Penguin Group, 2009, \$24.95

Dr. Jill Taylor, an anatomist at the Indiana University School of Medicine and speaker for the Harvard University Brain Bank, chronicles her personal journey after suffering a disabling left hemisphere hemorrhagic stroke in *My Stroke of Insight*.

Targeted at the lay population, the book is divided into 3 sections. The first section details Dr. Taylor's experiences in the field of neuroanatomy up to the year of her stroke. The second section begins in the minutes and hours following her stroke. She describes in great detail her acute onset aphasia, weakness, hemianesthesia, and sense of depersonalization. She views these early symptoms through her eyes as a neuroanatomist, providing a unique and powerful perspective that not only captures the horror of an acute stroke but the practical impact of its limitations on reaching out for help. Once admitted to the hospital, she provides first-hand accounts of her interactions with nurses, students,

interns, residents, and attending clinicians, describing the subtleties and nuances which resulted in both positive and negative experiences. This section provides a unique window into the minds of patients and emphasizes the impact that even small gestures from hospital staff and providers can have on stroke patients. The third section shifts gears and is devoted to anatomic theories and the philosophy underpinning the left-right brain debate.

This quick read would benefit physicians, physical, occupational, and speech therapists, stroke midlevel providers, nursing staff, and patient families. With the exception of the final chapters, this book chronicles a uniquely powerful perspective into stroke care and offers the opportunity to not only shape the minds of resident trainees but even remind seasoned clinicians of the importance each interaction has on the recovery of stroke patients.

Reviewed by Roy E. Strowd III, MD

Disclosure: Dr. Strowd serves on the *Neurology*[®] Resident & Fellow Team.

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