

MY STROKE OF INSIGHT by DR. JILL BOLTE TAYLOR

A Book Review

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I would like to briefly share with you my encounter with a book written by a young woman who survived a life-threatening stroke. The name of the book is MY STROKE OF INSIGHT and the author is Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor.

One morning in December 1996, Dr. Taylor suffered a hemorrhage from a congenital AV malformation. She was 37 years old at the time and the stroke occurred in the left hemisphere of her brain.

Dr. Taylor's book is relevant to all of us on many levels. She describes the signs and symptoms of having a stroke so that people will be educated as to the immediate action that should be taken to get medical attention. On a humanistic level, Dr. Taylor delves into her personal journey with this life-altering event. She discusses in detail how she was feeling while she was having the stroke and the decisions she was making to save her life while she was at death's door.

The book consists of 20 chapters:

Dr. Taylor was a neuroanatomist by training and she spends several chapters relating the details of her surgery and medical recovery.

(I will read the names of each chapter)

The most interesting part of the book for me was the author's discussion about the understanding that she gleaned from her experience. Having become dissociated from the analytical part of her brain when the circuitry was damaged from the hemorrhage, Dr. Taylor began to become aware of and tune into a peaceful and joyful part of her mind that she had not previously been aware of. The experience of living in this state of consciousness as a result of the stroke was the catalyst to change her perceptions and her attitudes concerning herself and what she now desired from this life experience. Dr. Taylor discusses at length that this was her stroke of insight.

I highly recommend the book to all optometrists to read and share with their patients, especially those who have experienced head trauma.