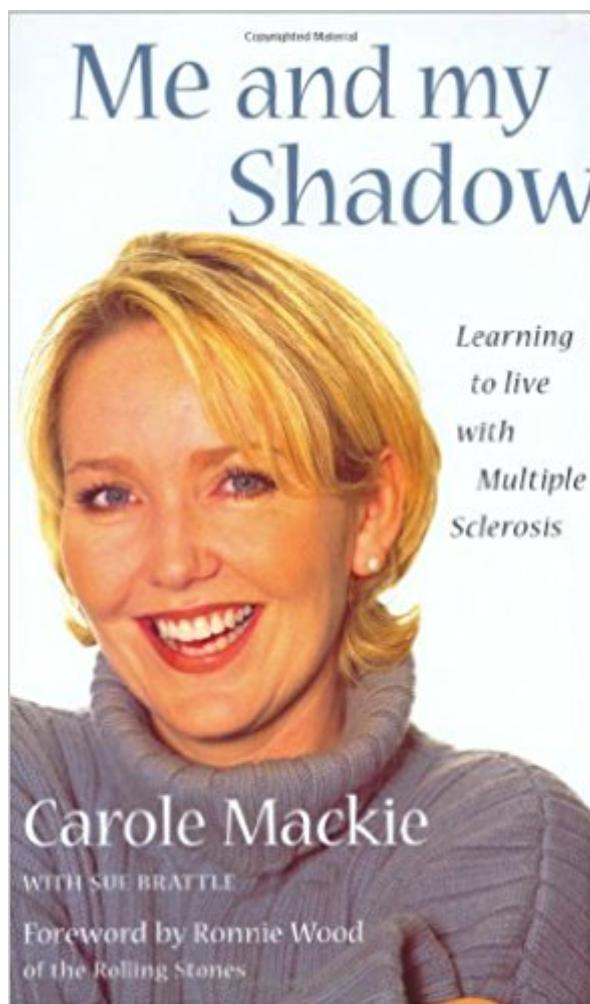


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Me And My Shadow: Learning To Live With Multiple Sclerosis



Synopsis

Published to coincide with MS Awareness Week, April 18-25 1999, this book recounts the story of Carole Mackie. Diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis at the age of 23, Carole has since gone on to become a leading figure in the fight against MS.'

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a 22-year-old flight attendant for British Airways, Mackie got her dream assignment: a flight and 10 days in Rio. But after a day of sunbathing on Copacabana Beach, a disquieting numbness crept through her body; after a collapse, she ended up in a Rio hospital, becoming more debilitated by the hour and, unable to speak Portuguese, utterly terrified. Three months and many painful tests later, she received her grim diagnosis: multiple sclerosis (MS), a degenerative disease of the brain and central nervous system. In this down-to-earth memoir, she details her struggle to come to terms with MS, regain control over her life and raise consciousness about an incurable and severely disabling disease that afflicts millions. In this somewhat overwritten account, she comes across as a highly engaging yet very ordinary girl next-door. Brutally frank about the toll MS takes and her feelings of isolation, Mackie gives vent to her anger, frustration and her need to heal. She loses her live-in boyfriend of four years (though some readers may find him an insensitive lout she's well rid of); copes with the constant stress of informing family, friends and co-workers about her disease; battles to keep her job and stay solvent; and faces a series of painful and frightening relapses as well as the knowledge that more will come. Though "grieving the loss of her health," Mackie investigates

alternative treatments, becomes a spokesperson for the disease and organizes fund-raising benefits. Her memoir is a good introduction to the subject for the newly diagnosed, their families and friends. (June) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Mackie was in her early twenties and a flight attendant with British Airways when she was stricken with multiple sclerosis (MS). In most respects her book is just another story of a young woman's symptoms, terror, diagnosis, combined relief and fear ("What a relief, I thought...at last this thing has a name and I can start dealing with it"), and valiant attempt to live a "normal" life with the limitations of MS. Where it differs from other titles is in the chapter "The Employer's Story." With any chronic illness, an employer must consider the ill person's ability and need to stay employed, co-workers' needs to be treated fairly, and the employer's need to get the work done. This chapter takes a close look at this "balancing act" from the point of view of Mackie's supervisor. Titles such as Barbara D. Webster's All of a Piece (Johns Hopkins, 1989) and Moira Griffin's Going the Distance (Dutton, 1989) fill the need for information and inspiration, but Mackie's book goes beyond because it deals with the employment topic directly. Recommended for all general audiences. AMary J. Nickum, Bozeman, MT Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I enjoyed this book, and saw so much of my own symptoms, emotional reaction and trying to cope with the disability. I was interested to read about how she felt when she started getting feeling back after the numbness and thinking everything was alright. It is some comfort to know that for the most part, the same things run through our heads and we are not all alone in what we feel. I felt that her interaction with her boyfriend and her daily life was appropriate to relate to the reader, as it illustrates the emotional rollercoaster we are on, and that our relationships are affected by such a diagnosis.

I loved this book when I first read it (20 years ago) I have ms and this book is so me. My shadow and I do not agree much anymore but hey who else can I argue and get angry with that will not yell at me.

Blah

I read this book and saw so much of myself. As a newly diagnosed young woman, it is a comfort to know that there really are people out there struggling day in and day out with this disease! Thank

you Carole for your wonderful insight!

This is the first book that I have read that is about having and living with MS. I read a negative review from someone who had MS who thought that Carole's symptoms were not bad enough for her to complain about. Yet, there are so many of us out there who have what is most of the time a hidden disease. We look fine, but often don't feel fine. We know that next "episode" may be just around the corner and that it could take away more of the "normal" part of us. Those around you can't understand. It was wonderful to find someone who feels like me. Frightened, but determined is what I saw in Carole's spirit. I realize that those of us who suffer at a similar level as Carole are lucky, but I also know that it is not the same "me" as before and I don't like it. I, like Carole, am learning to redefine "me" and to fight this disease with all I have. Carole's story made me feel better about this newer "me" and coping with what life has dealt me. She voiced so many things that I have been feeling. I felt like I had found a friend who understood.

Carole Mackie's story of her symptoms, her diagnosis, the progress of her disease, and the things she did; projects she took upon herself to help her come to terms with her disease is one of the best 'personal story' books on MS that I have read. Because the course of her disease was so similar to my own. I feel like most people with the relapsing-remitting type of the disease need to read this book. She doesn't over dramatize, or give any technical medical rundown. She is just an ordinary working young person faced suddenly, and joltingly, with a potentially, progressively debilitating disease. How she deals with it and comes to acceptance was life-reaffirming to me. She answered the question for me: where do, and will I be able to go from here?

I read this book soon after I was diagnosed in 2000, and found it very helpful to me. Not only were the descriptions of her symptoms similar to some of mine, I was also remitting relapsing at the time. It helped to give some idea of how people close to me might be feeling. The biggest impact for me though was when I read the part about when a close friend of hers was killed in a car accident and it made me realise that although this is a terrible disease- shocking things happen to people all the time. I think I am trying to say it gave me more perspective and I think that might have been Carole's intention.

I was recently diagnosed w/ MS and picked up this book because, do I dare say, the title! It really spoke to me. As I read the book the things she said were so in line with what I was experiencing,

right down to her diagnosis - assuming it meant you're off to the wheelchair, questions about being able to have children, the whole nine yards. I felt like it was me in that book - and in many ways it was. Its only been a month since I was diagnosed and its hard for those around me to understand what I'm going through. Indeed, this book gave me someone to connect with. I think its a good book for the newly diagnosed. It puts things in perspective.

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