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Twilight: Losing Sight, Gaining Insight



Synopsis

In 1992, when Henry Grunwald missed a glass into which he was pouring water, he assumed that he needed new eyeglasses, not that the incident was a harbinger of darker times. But in fact Grunwald was entering the early stages of macular degeneration -- a gradual loss of sight that affects almost 15 million Americans yet remains poorly understood and is, so far, incurable. Now, in *Twilight*, Grunwald chronicles his experience of disability: the clouding of his sight, and the daily struggle to overcome its physical and psychological implications; the discovery of what medicine can and cannot do to restore sight; his compulsion to understand how the eye works, its evolution, and its symbolic meaning in culture and art. Grunwald gives us an autobiography of the eye -- his visual awakening as a child and young man, and again as an older man who, facing the loss of sight, feels a growing wonder at the most ordinary acts of seeing. This is a story not merely about seeing but about living; not merely about losing sight but about gaining insight. It is a remarkable meditation.

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Customer Reviews

Written by a retired Editor-in-Chief of Time, Inc. publications, this slender tome gives the author's musings on macular degeneration, which is an incurable, age-related, gradual loss of vision that affects millions of Americans. It is a loss that the author himself experienced, though initially, having worn eyeglasses all his life, he simply thought that he needed a prescription for stronger lenses. The author gives the reader a historical perspective of age related macular degeneration and the state of this disease in the medical world today. He also recounts his early struggle with the permanent loss of vision and his somewhat difficult transition to the world of the blind and partially blind, given the fact that his life had always revolved around the written word and voracious reading. This is a very personal chronicle of one man's journey, both physical and emotional, to a new phase in his long and rich life. It is clearly a journey that the author would have preferred not to have taken, but having taken it, though against his will, he makes the most of it. A gifted writer, the author shares his experiences with great candor and insight. This is an informative, inspirational work from the heart. Those who read it will gain knowledge of the insidious disease that is macular degeneration. It is certainly a disease with which all those who may potentially become afflicted should be familiar. Baby Boomers, in particular, should take heed.

Henry Grunwald opens up to share his story of living with macular degeneration. His eloquence and grace, literally, lifts us out of the isolation and confusion that accompanies the vision loss. This book is for every person affected and everyone they know.

This slim yet satisfying narrative caught me off guard with its subtle prose and striking wisdom. Henry Grunwald writes with a journalist's precision, weaving a case for slowing down to enjoy life's little details. Reading this book will only take you a couple of days, but it just might change your life.

Age Related Macular Degeneration is incurable and is the leading cause of sight loss and blindness among men over the age of sixty. Henry Grunwald is the former editor-in-chief of all Time, Inc., publications and under President Reagan US Ambassador to his native Austria. You may recall that he wrote a piece on his loss of vision in The New Yorker in 1996. This is an excellent book for those of you who have friends or relatives (or yourselves) who must learn to accept vision loss. Grunwald, whose life is lived through words and art, recounts his angry fight against and then acceptance of his condition, a fight filled with frustrations, depressions. He learns that "IT COULD BE WORSE". I called KNOPF, the publisher. They have no plans to issue an AUDIO version, but they have made an AUDIO VERSION available to THE LIGHTHOUSE for the Blind in Manhattan. COntact the store

As a new person to the field of age-related vision loss, I picked up Grunwald's book and instantly felt a genuine person telling me his story and explaining his perspectives. His book is not compartmentalized in medical, emotional and social sections. It is a natural journey through which you begin to understand what Grunwald experienced. As a writer myself, I can only imagine how difficult it must be to no longer pick up your own books and read them, as in Grunwald's account of his frustration or simply write and edit with ease. His plain English explanation of his feelings, situations and medical details of his vision loss has been a gift that has helped me understand what persons with degenerative vision loss are going through. Thank you Henry for pouring yourself into a book, just to help so many others affected directly and indirectly by degenerative vision loss. Your impact lasts beyond the last words in your book.

This is a sensitive, inspirational book about Henry Grunwald's journey into macular degeneration. I am buying two more books for my brothers to increase their understanding of our mother's struggle with this disease. And speaking of my mother, she would love to read this book (especially the part about mistaking the Princess of Wales for Diane Sawyer) and she would be inspired by his account of "losing sight, gaining insight." Unfortunately, she can't do either because the book isn't in LARGE, BOLD. BLACK TYPE or ON TAPE. Publisher Alfred A Knopf, ARE YOU LISTENING?

I received this book as Christmas present and read it in a couple of hours. Recently at the age of 43, I experienced retinal detachment in one eye with the risk of the same in the other eye. Grunwald's writing, with its humor about his predicament, and his thoughtful analysis of how his life has (and has not) changed, really touched me. I recommend it to anyone with low vision or anyone living with someone with low vision. The book is available on tape from the Lighthouse Foundation, by the way (according to a newspaper article I read).

My mother has macular degeneration and needed this book on tape. My mom found the book to be very helpful. I also read it to try to understand better what she deals with every day. She also purchased 2 copies of the book in hardcover for her eye specialists. Although they know all the medical information already, the book can give them insight into their patient's plight. I recommend the book to anyone who knows or works with someone with low vision.

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