

Book and Media Reviews

Cathleen Morrow, MD Book Reviews Editor

Publishers who wish to submit books for possible inclusion in *Family Medicine's* book reviews section should send texts to Cathleen Morrow, MD, *Family Medicine* book reviews editor, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Department of Community and Family Medicine, HB 7015, 1 Medical Center Drive, Lebanon, NH 03756. cathleen.morrow@dartmouth.edu. Reviewers interested in writing reviews for publication should contact Dr Morrow as well.

All books reviewed in this column are available for purchase at amazon.com through the STFM portal at www.stfm.org/bookstore.

Living Jonathan's Life: A Doctor's Descent Into Darkness and Addiction, Scott M. Davis, Deerfield Beach, FL, Health Communications, Inc, 2007, 243 pp., \$14.95 softcover.

Living Jonathan's Life was written by Scott M. Davis, MD, an internist and addiction specialist at the Betty Ford Clinic in Rancho Mirage, CA. Dr Davis is also a clinical instructor in addiction medicine at Loma Linda University School of Medicine and an author of articles in the *Journal of Addictive Diseases*. The purpose of the book is to tell the story of identical twin brothers fighting similar emotional and physical battles. One dies of AIDS while the other swallows his pain and grief with opiates. It is the story of an internal medicine resident nearing completion of his residency who would not allow himself to grieve, his descent into drug addiction to help with sleep and chronic pain, and his journey to recovery.

The first 125 pages of *Living Jonathan's Life* tell the story of the twin brothers and what happens when "we lose touch with our center," ignore losses, and keep family secrets. After the death of his brother, the author ignores his true feelings. His psyche communicates with him in the form of debilitating

physical pain, the pattern paralleling his brother's pain, which the author treats with opiates. As the pain becomes central to his life, he consults other physicians who prescribe more drugs, make referrals, and ultimately install a morphine pump. The author hits bottom when he is reported for writing prescriptions for himself and is terminated from his practice. Dr Davis enters treatment for chemical dependency at the Springbrook Northwest Program in Oregon and confronts his emotional demons. Interspersed throughout the story are a series of poems written by the author's deceased brother, which adds depth to the story of his experience.

The second half of the book is a physician addiction guide, containing a glossary of common addiction terms, a compendium of drug treatment programs, a self-assessment screening questionnaire for alcohol, drug, or behavioral addiction and a list of intervention resources. The latter is particularly informative for those who have never participated or been trained in intervention techniques. Intervention is the step that comes before one enters a recovery program, and the author goes into detail about this important process.

Living Jonathan's Life would be excellent reading for medical, dental, and veterinary students;

residents; and those in pharmacy, nursing, addiction studies, psychology, or clinical social work. It is a short but powerful story detailing one physician's spiral into addiction, which could happen to any of us. Family medicine curriculum requires content in physician well-being and impairment. Our program used this book for a discussion group along with didactic presentations on physician impairment and diversion programs. The discussion format in a relaxed setting provided an opportunity to explore the additional topics of twin psychology, psychosomatic issues, gender differences, and family dynamics. Using this book is a cost-effective way to discuss physician impairment with residents and other health care professionals.

The reviewers also recommend the following article: *Reaching Out to an Impaired Physician* by Joseph R. Yancy, MD, CPT, MC, and Harry D. McKinnon, MD, LTC (Ret.), MC, *Family Practice Management*, January/February 2010. Available at www.aafp.org/fpm/2010/0100/p27.

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