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#### Speaking for the Child: An Autobiography and a Challenge

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#### An Inspiration , September 30, 2011

By **\*\*\*La\*\*\*** - See all my reviews

This review is from: *Speaking for the Child: An Autobiography and a Challenge* (Paperback)

The fact that I don't have a disability didn't keep me from relating to Rhonda's experience with slowly progressive visual and hearing impairments. Like she says this isn't the story of an unbroken series of triumphant gestures, nor does she present herself as life's innocent victim. I see a real person in this book. I see the strength and the weakness in her that makes her accessible to an ordinary person like me.

Johnson takes me inside her mind where I watch sound and vision slowly fade away. Then I feel the pain and anger of having the people around her judge her behavior as if she had no disability but was just stupid and hardheaded. Johnson captures the pain and the anger of living in a world where she cannot explain to others what's going on because she doesn't really understand herself. What's more, people tell her that if she thinks no one understands her, that is proof she's everything they accuse her of being. When she does come to understand her disabilities, she still has to sort out decades of unresolved emotions. At the end of the day, she was able to speak for the child who could not speak for herself, and now we have this book.

I really got into this book. Although there are some painful moments, Johnson doesn't tell a sob sad story. In fact, I found myself laughing at some things, crying at others and sometimes just wanting to jump in there and slap somebody. As I read, I wondered how anybody could survive what she did without going bonkers. I didn't think I could have, but she did and I began to think if she could go through all that then I could deal with my life.

I was greatly inspired by *Speaking for the Child*. It took some courage for Johnson to share so much of herself. Her honesty is the strength of her writing. I recommend this book to anyone who loves great writing, but especially to those who struggle in this life.

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#### Multiple disabilities but she's not disabled , October 8, 2011

By **Harold Rush** - See all my reviews

This review is from: *Speaking for the Child: An Autobiography and a Challenge* (Paperback)

"Speaking for the Child" by Rhonda Johnson is a compelling read, whether one has a disability or not. Almost everyone knows someone who is unsighted or deaf or has some form of physical challenge. Sometimes that person would be able to be more independent if we listened to them, so we would know how to best assist them. Too many times, we decide for the person what kind of help they need and how to meet that need.

Worse than that, with children, we may not understand that the child has a physical impairment and we misjudge their behavior totally. This is what happened with Ms Johnson. She was going deaf and didnt realize it, (she was a child), and the adults around her decided she had behavior problems, thus causing her a hellish childhood.

Later, she begins to lose her sight, compounding her life's challenges more than most of us could ever imagine.

The beauty of this book however, is not the terrible things that happen to Ms Johnson, but how beautifully she rises to these challenges and overcomes them, to the extent that she not only goes to college but manages to get a Master's degree. And she doesn't stop there. She's still reaching for new heights but you'll have to buy and read the book to enjoy her humorous take on people and her life. I definitely recommend this book to anyone who loves great writing and loves being inspired!