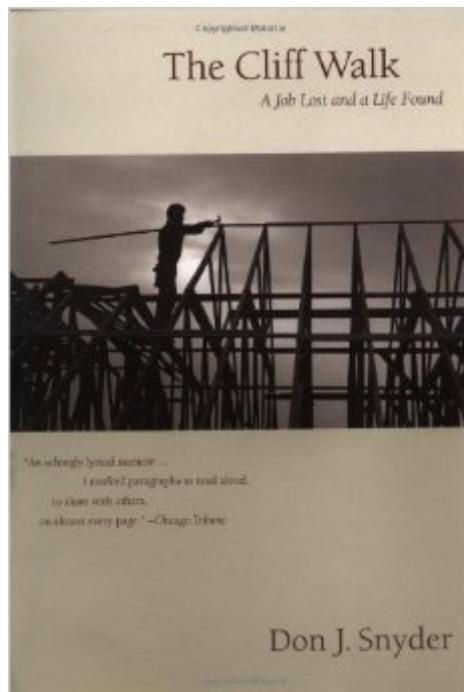


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The Cliff Walk: A Memoir Of A Job Lost And A Life Found



Synopsis

Snyder's account of temporarily losing his way in life presents a heartrending and inspiring memoir that "confronts the not-so-secret fear that haunts every American who works for a living" ("Atlanta Journal-Constitution"). Author publicity. .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don Snyder's book is wonderful. Having been one of his students, this is not surprising. Don Snyder was the most influential professor that I had at Colgate. His class was about life as much as it was about literature. For example, Don moved our classroom from one of the magnificent gray stoned buildings perched high on the hill of the campus, to a dank basement in one of the college houses at the bottom of the hill, so as to remove us from the ivory tower. He taught us the danger of assumption and vain glory. He challenged us to see the precarious nature of our lives and to take little for granted. Most importantly, Don challenged us to rid ourselves of the illusions of power and security, to find out what is truly the one most important thing in our lives and to live for this thing, this person. I kept waiting for him to tell me what that one thing should be. He never did. He left that to me and I am so thankful to him. This is the lesson of the book.

This moving, at times poetic tale of coping with job loss should be required reading for everybody that works with dislocated workers. As a self-made professional who defined his place in the world by his success in academe, Snyder experiences all the classic steps of grief when he loses his job.

This guy was not just knee-deep, he was up to his ears in denial--and his family, particularly his wife, paid the price. I was particularly moved by his wife's ability to swallow her pride to return merchandise following his bouts of profligate overspending--even as she was reduced to applying for food stamps to feed their 4 kids. How could he be so foolish? Snyder lets us see exactly how . . . and also shows us how his eventual acceptance changed not only his job, but his life. I work in a retraining program for dislocated workers, and this book provided me more insight into the devastation of job loss than any how-to book I've come across. I wept, and so will you.

This is the ultimate victory story...with a twist. Unlike most autobiographical profiles, this one doesn't stand tall and tell you how great it is to be great. The thing is, it doesn't wrap itself up neatly either; the ending doesn't suddenly justify everything that has happened along the way. It's a formula all it's own, one that carries you up and down through the vulnerable channels this man had to endure. What's so refreshing about this book is kind of what I liked about the movie "Fargo"--the realization that a good story is as much the cumulative value of the bits and pieces as it is the linear value--of this happening, then this, then this. Moments like his talking to a stranger while chipping golf balls capture the true feeling, the mixed combination of killing time with his genuine fear of being unemployed for even one more day. It's a strange loneliness that we all feel from time to time, even when we're not truly alone. Again, most writers need to have scaled great mountains before they'll write a story where they hang themselves out like this. Don Snyder makes an exception. In today's world, most nonfiction books succeed based on what they emphasize, leave in, or leave out. Snyder tells it all--even the bits that aren't exactly flattering. And in the end, he shows his true grit: not with eagles or birdies, but simply by making the pars he's supposed to make. And don't let my analogies fool you: it's not about golf. It's just your typical combination of fear and pride and confusion that somehow lead us to where we are today. And it's that kind of simplicity that makes a book like this stand the test of time, whether it be now or 50 years down the road.

'The Cliff Walk' by Don J. Snyder provides insight into the thought processes and depression brought on by a job loss. It is a "to the point" book about how this man looks at other people while dealing with the emotional trama of losing and not being able to find another job. The internal battles about self worth, self expectation, and self doubt are mixed with the just plain day to day problems of how to survive. Mr. Snyder hits close to home for anyone who as ever lost a job as he describes his sink into depression and then the realization that he really is no better than anyone else. The characters in the book are fully developed, especially Colleen, his wife. I felt her strength as I read

the pages of the book. I became so emotionally involved I had to force myself to put the book down in order to escape from the feeling of being cornered only to find myself drawn back into the pages as soon as I could stand the emotional pain. It is a must read reminder for anyone who had ever been in this situation and a must read for anyone trying to understand someone who is coping with a job loss.

I just read this book while still mired in a job search going on three years. The emotional tailspin the author displays is heart-wrenching and familiar; the tone of the first 200 pages felt like reading my own journals. I did not identify with the author's deceptions and strange behaviors, however, such as lying to his wife or to an insurance company, or considering selling a new baby. But everyone has their own threshold for going haywire, and the point of this book is that Don Snyder got through it and learned something about life, work, and family. THE CLIFF WALK, beyond the author's personal journey, raises excellent questions about the "American Dream" and what it means in our modern age. It also looks at the meaning of work, and how we draw self-esteem -- even identity -- from what we do for pay. This is a courageous book, even if you don't always approve of how the author responds to his plight, and it offers a strong dose of perspective on what really matters.

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