Mary V. Rivers and Dvora Shurman, the two authors of this book, had similar experiences: a struggle to accept their loved one’s deafness, dealing with a deaf person’s silent world and being the ear and the voice for a deaf son and parents. Both came from a family that immigrated to the United States from Europe. Mary was the ear and voice for her mother who did not know English and Dvora was the ear and voice for her deaf parents. Both learned that the only way to accept deafness was to understand the deaf world through learning their language, culture, and their way of life.

Another similarity between Mary and Dvora was their thirst for learning. Mary wanted to see that her deaf son Clay received the best possible education. Her hard work and commitment was similar to what Dvora had done for her deaf parents. Reading about the total devastation and frequent denial when learning of her son’s deafness and coming to terms with it over the next several years was touching and powerful. This is something that all parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children will deal with. It is important parents understand that it is they who have the ability, commitment, and love to do what is right for their child and that it will not be an easy journey but definitely possible.

Mary discusses her denial and shame about deafness and growing up with her family background, how she met her husband, the experience of discovering her son’s deafness, the ongoing struggle with the acceptance of her son’s deafness, and the beauty of sharing both worlds with her son in sign language. Similarly, Dvora discusses her deaf parents’ childhood upbringing, how they met, the continuing challenges she has had with her aunt, the struggles she had while growing up in both worlds, and the discovery of her own identity later on in her life.

My interest in reading and reviewing *Deaf Lives in Contrast: Two Women’s Stories* is both personal and professional. I had a similar experience of being upset when I learned that my first child was deaf. Ironically, both my husband and I are deaf, and our feelings should have been the opposite, as most deaf people would be thrilled to have a deaf child. However, it was not the child’s deafness that upset me; it was remembering the commitment, tireless work, and ongoing challenges that my mother went through while raising me. The whole idea of having to go through the same parenting struggles that my mother experienced pained me deeply.

In reading this book, one can sense the pain, frustration, and struggles that Mary experienced as a parent of a deaf child. Mary has shown that the reason for Clay’s success in life was due to her ongoing involvement, unconditional love, acceptance of his deafness, and welcoming herself into Clay’s silent world by using sign language. When two people can communicate freely, it takes away the shame about the person’s deafness and makes the silent world a wonder for hearing people. Through Dvora’s struggle to understand her parents’ deaf world, language, and shame, and the discovery of her family’s religious background and deaf culture, she found herself to be the bridge between both worlds. This helped her to develop a better appreciation of her own heritage as a daughter of Deaf parents.

This book is a must read for anyone who grew up in a Deaf family or has a relationship with someone who is a child of deaf adults or grandparents.

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