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Lost In a Desert World: The Autobiography Of Roland Johnson

Roland Johnson

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Roland Johnson : Lost In a Desert World: The Autobiography Of Roland Johnson before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lost In a Desert World: The Autobiography Of Roland Johnson:

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and one of the only things my mom asked for so oh well.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. heart touching storyBy CustomerHe went through a lot of abuse but grew up to be a kind and caring man. I wish he was still with us I would like to write to him and give him support.I hope Penhurst will never happen again, but sadly I know the abuse goes on in places where care should happen.Hopefully the sick abusers will be weeded out and never get themselves jobs in care homes again3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Roland Johnson helps us all "find a voice"By Janet E Hunt-HawkinsRoland Johnson's LOST IN A DESERT WORLD, An Autobiography (as-told-to Karl Williams) captures the reader in understanding the root of leadership...in a new kind of civil rights movement: The self-advocacy movement for people with disabilities. Each time I read Roland's story, I have a new lesson to learn about a hard life, but about a life that surfaced it's way toward "finding a voice" for all of us. Remarkably, while Roland tells his story: how his parent's decided it was necessary to place Roland at a state institution and how he was treated there, the reader can "see" Roland's insight as if he was understanding all sides to his own story and that he did not succumb to the decisions made for him by others. Roland, instead, rose to every occasion, personal event and tragedy and taught us all that the grimmer side of a life can be turned around. Through Roland's autobiography, he showed us that self-reflection and focusing on a speck of light through seemingly whole darkness can lead us in a more positive direction. Roland talked about "a shyness within himself", and I believe we all contain that, in part, as a way to develop our inner self-esteem and self-respect. That inner shyness has its rewards - as Roland showed us - that once we develop that voice, once we find it, we can make things happen for ourselves - for people with disabilities. LOST IN A DESERT WORLD, also available on audio, provides an opportunity for listeners and readers to learn about a significant national self-advocacy leader and to reflect on our individual lives in ways that may be ordinarily difficult. Anyone who reads Roland's story should find hope and inspiration, and perhaps, a new way to take direction for him or herself. Karl Williams masterfully puts Roland's story down in a deservingly and highly respectable manner, using Roland's authentic voice - only putting order to Roland's hard but eloquent words as he spoke. Roland's Johnson's autobiography, LOST IN A DESERT WORLD: Reading or hearing this story provides a wonderful message for people to learn about the self-advocacy movement while also allowing the reader to absorb in a powerfully concrete method for self-reflection - for who they are, where they came from and for deciding the direction in which they should lead - or - follow.

Forty or fifty years ago, when a child was born with a developmental disability - mental retardation, in Roland Johnson's case - the doctor would invariably counsel the parents to put their son or daughter away and forget about them.Roland Johnson's mother and father did not take this advice. But in the 1950s in Philadelphia they had no one to help them - no counselors, no psychologists, no therapists, no teachers. And when the problems that Roland's disability presented began to overwhelm them, they had no choice but to resign themselves to that original advice.Roland Johnson spent half his childhood at Pennhurst State School outside Philadelphia, where he saw fellow residents abused and where he himself was abused. But somehow he was able to keep his spirit alive. When he won his freedom as a young adult, he spent several years putting his life together. Then, as president of Speaking For Ourselves, he became an internationally known speaker and leader in the self-advocacy movement.Roland Johnson was a man of great courage and vision and determination. He had what can be called an alternate kind of intelligence - one not based on the ability to manipulate data. In Roland Johnson's world understanding - one person for another - is the way of the future, the only route to true freedom.Though virtually unknown in his lifetime outside the self-advocacy movement, he was a pioneer: his life traced a path no one had trod before - he escaped the hell his disability had consigned him to and went on to speak out and organize on behalf of his brothers and sisters.

"...intimate and vivid portrayal...(of) a full human being: a sympathetic, vulnerable, thoughtful, capable, contributing, powerful, fellow human being... -- Journal AAMR, December, 2000From the PublisherSpeaking For Ourselves is a Philadelphia-based organization with nine chapters across Pennsylvania. Run by people with developmental disabilities, its mission is to speak out on important issues, to provide support for its members, and to teach the public about the needs, wishes, and potential of people with disabilities.From the AuthorRoland Johnson and I tape recorded hours of conversation about his life. I took out all my questions and comments and worked entirely and exclusively with Roland's words. What you will read is an authentic voice; what I did was only to bring some order to that which is erratic in each of us, the memory of our own existence... Between these pages is all the evidence anyone should need to convince them that there is most definitely something of value to be found in people with developmental disabilities. It may be difficult to put into words what that something is. It has nothing to do with what we now define as intelligence - or with wealth or power or physical attractiveness. But because it may be a bit elusive, this contribution they have to make, that does not mean that it does not exist...My hope is that, as you read Roland Johnson's words, that peculiar brand of embarrassment with which the world now responds to people who are different in the way that he was different will begin to dissipate in you. We have not fully embraced the universe until we open our eyes and our hearts to all that it contains. Roland Johnson and his brothers and sisters constitute one of the

wonders of this world we live in; may this book open your eyes to that fact.