

## IN PRINT

### The Illustrated Guide to Assistive Technology & Devices: Tools and Gadgets for Living Independently

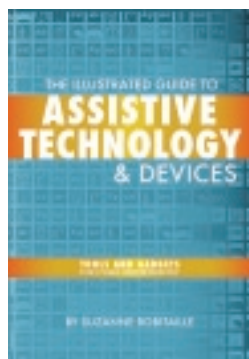
by Suzanne Robitaille

The author presents two objectives in her preface: to help people with disabilities make informed assistive technology (AT) purchasing decisions and to demonstrate how AT can positively influence their lives. Robitaille's book has 10 chapters—two introduce AT and its history, five focus on AT for specific disabilities (vision, hearing, physical, cognitive and learning, communication), and three provide information about the Americans with Disabilities Act, how to pay for AT, and the future of AT. Although the book does not focus on people with MS, there is useful information in each chapter for individuals living with this disease and their families.

The strengths of this book include its easy-reading style, extensive use of photographs, "tips" boxes, and suggestions about where to get more information. The resource listing at the end of the book is particularly useful. The weakness is the limited information to aid purchasing decisions. It would have been useful to have specific

information about the pros and cons of particular devices, the typical problems encountered by users, questions to ask before purchasing, and how to select a reputable dealer. Some of this is provided, but not consistently. The section on mobility devices is very short, which may be disappointing for some people with MS. The chapter on how to pay for AT summarizes common funders, but more detail on strategies to overcome funding barriers would have been helpful. As it stands, the book would be most helpful for people who want to get a few ideas before heading off to do more serious consumer investigation.

Even with its limits, the book addresses a gap in the consumer literature. Interested readers should check for a copy in their Society chapter library, among their support group resources, and in the public library. Its content will likely increase awareness of what AT can do, and may encourage people to explore their options.



Demos Health, 2010, 208 pp., \$19.95. 800-532-8663, [demosmedpub.com](http://demosmedpub.com).

Reviewed by Marcia Finlayson, PhD, OTR/L, MSCS, associate professor, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago.

### Multiple Sclerosis Manifesto

by Julie Stachowiak, PhD

**M**ultiple Sclerosis Manifesto is a personal statement about living with MS, best described by its subtitle: "Action to Take, Principles to Live By." Dr. Stachowiak is an epidemiologist who lets the reader know from the beginning that her recommendations are grounded in her own experiences with the disease. In the first few pages she explains that she is writing about personal dignity and ways to maintain control in the face of a disease that is often chaotic. She explores the concept of self-efficacy and explains how to achieve one's goals.

Only a writer with first-hand experience could write so well about fatigue, cognitive dysfunction and other painful experiences so familiar to those living with MS.

Dr. Stachowiak's book includes valuable insights about how to create and use a personal health-care team and a wealth of information on traditional and complementary treatments, including sound advice on how

to make appropriate judgments about each. Many tips about physical and mental activity are offered to help the reader establish a broad approach to life, health and relationships.

Dr. Stachowiak concludes with a thorough overview of resources available to people with MS, with a special focus on how to use them successfully. Boxed insets throughout the book emphasize important points. While some of this material is generically motivational (cat-



egories include “Take Charge,” “Know Your Stuff” and “The Real World”), many effectively address issues specific to MS, making the work refreshingly honest and clear.

The book is not without some limitations. Not all of the information is as intuitively organized as it could be (e.g., information on setting up a “Power of Attorney” falls under the “Living with MS” section) and the index could be strengthened. While Dr. Stachowiak provides an excel-

lent description of how to live with MS, her description of the MS disease process could be improved.

A few deficiencies aside, **Multiple Sclerosis Manifesto** offers extensive information and valuable strategies for self-empowerment for anyone living with the disease.

Demos Health, 2010, 338 pp., \$19.95. 11 West 42nd Street, 15th Fl., New York, NY 10036; [demoshealth.com](http://demoshealth.com). ■

Reviewed by George Garmany, MD, a neurologist practicing in Boulder, Colo., and chair of **Momentum's** Editorial Advisory Board.