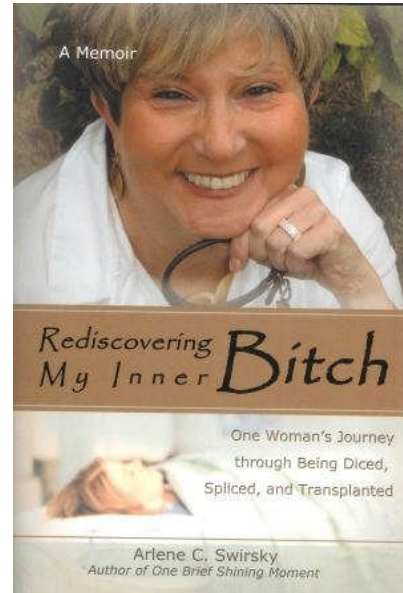


A Review of

Rediscovering My Inner Bitch

One Woman's Journey through Being Diced, Spliced, and Transplanted

Author: Arlene C. Swirsky



Reviewed by Jim Gleason, a 1994 heart recipient

Don't say you weren't forewarned. The author delivers on her book title in spades, with strong language and weekly diary like descriptions of more pain and medical frustration than hopefully any reader will ever face in their own lives. With strong language and amazing humor, Arlene takes us on a journey that goes far beyond just a kidney transplant. She is challenged both before and after the transplant with an endless array of extremely painful and potentially life-threatening complications. Supported by family and medical teams which are often the butt of her humor, together they climb one mountain of challenge after another, often to find an even higher summit lies ahead. Sharing the daily trivia and more serious life events, the reader is drawn into feeling her pain and frustration time and time again. For four long years she endures depression and painful treatments of one ailment after another. While there are rays of sunshine amid the darkness, they seem too few and far between. Hers is not what I would consider a typical transplant experience, but then there wouldn't be a book to write if this was the norm.

While all's well that ends well, this is not a book for the lighthearted. If you have your own life and medical challenges, you may walk away from this reading feeling far better off for not having lived her experiences. At the same time you might feel inspired with how she uses her wit and "bitchiness" to get through an endless series of very painful and trying times, memories spiced with the usual family characters, idiosyncrasies and even household pets' medical complications to convey the daily reality of living a life through long term illness. Arlene allows the reader deep insight into her heart and mind, sharing the full range of human emotions which touch even more deeply when it comes to reflections about her deceased donor.

Everyone must find their own way in facing the challenges of daily life. In Arlene's case we find a unique inner strength that expresses itself in her self-proclaimed unconventional "bitchiness" that makes it possible for her to endure and eventually thrive beyond the days, months and four years of pain. For the medical professional reading her story, there is insight into the mind of what must have been a very challenging patient, but in that forcefulness those medical teams had a partner that refused to give up, a true survivor, and isn't that what it's all about? Given the character that comes across in this reading I find myself interested in going back and reading the author's first book, **One Brief Shining Moment**, to see how she wrote before all this physical pain. But as they say, that's another story for another time.

Note: **Rediscovering My Inner Bitch** is available in hard cover at Amazon.com.

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.