



Listening Closely: A Journey to Bilateral Hearing

Arlene Romoff

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Imagine what it would be like not to hear a sound--no music, no friendly voices, no children's laughter. Arlene Romoff doesn't have to imagine how it would feel: she lived it. Although she was born with normal hearing, in her late teens it began to slip away, as if someone were lowering the volume of the world around her. Over the next twenty-five years, Arlene began a long, slow descent into deafness so profound that no hearing aid or assistive device could help. The experience was devastating.

But then Arlene opted for what she considers a miracle: She got a cochlear implant. Using electrodes threaded into the cochlea, an internal computer chip, and an external computer processor, cochlear implants bypass the damaged portion of the cochlea and stimulate the auditory nerve directly, allowing sound to reach the brain. Amazingly, she could hear again.

Arlene's journey, however, isn't just about the magic of technology. What she endured reveals as much about the strength of the human spirit, about the wonders of chance and fate, and about making the most of what life dishes out. For Arlene, events seemed to unfold almost as if they were a part of some elaborate plan: just when she went deaf, her insurance company began paying for the implants. And ten years later, when her old cochlear implant finally failed she received new state-of-the-art technology and underwent yet another metamorphosis--one that helped her continue to counsel others in a similar situation.

LISTENING CLOSELY will give you a chance to walk in Arlene Romoff's shoes, to understand the pain of her loss and the joy of once again being able to hear the music of the world. Those suffering from hearing loss--or who have loved one who is--will find Arlene's very special journey both inspirational and informative.



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