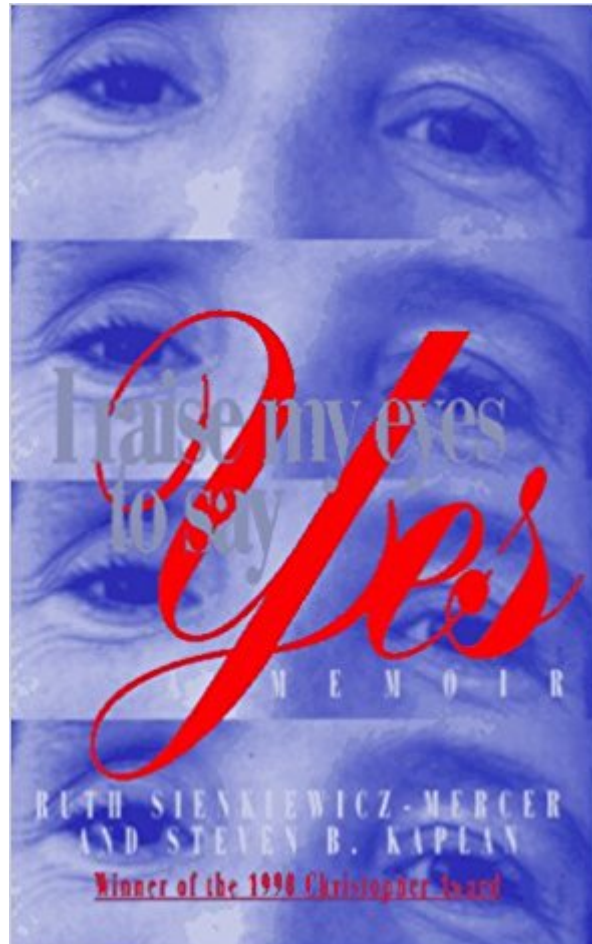




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I Raise My Eyes To Say Yes



Synopsis

Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer was born in 1950. She has never spoken a word; never walked, never fed herself, never combed her own hair. Trapped in a body that is functionally useless, her mind works perfectly. This is her story. Absorbing and heartbreaking, it was written with the collaboration of Ruth's friend, Steven Kaplan. Without any self pity Ruth recounts her early childhood with a loving family and some happy years at a rehabilitation center, then virtual incarceration at the notorious Belchertown State School in Massachusetts. After 16 years she was released and now she enjoys a life of purpose and personal triumph. *I Raise My Eyes to Say Yes* will permanently alter your perception of the severely disabled and it will inspire you with the extraordinary power of love, thought, and the human spirit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An extraordinary look at being severely disabled in a society that is ill prepared to cope with the handicapped

A remarkable collaboration. . . both sad and triumphant

This is an amazing story, and it is well written. It is a rare insight into the lives of non-speaking people and the struggles of people with severe speech and physical impairments. Parts of it are pretty intense--frightening even. But Ruth just shines through. This book inspires me.

Bought 5 copies, loved the book.

I was fortunate enough to work with Ruth for about a year before she passed away. Anyone who has met Ruth knows that her spirit transcended her physical disability. This book is only one example of her courage and perseverance. Please, please read this book. It might change your outlook on people with disabilities.

I had the pleasure of working with Ruth in the 70's and 80's in Belchertown State School. This was before and during the time that people were discovering that she could understand. I worked upstairs in the Infirmary and she lived on the first floor, women. I would come downstairs to lift her onto "the Slab" (a waist high shallow bath tub) when it was bathing time. My arm span was such that when I lifted her it would not hurt her rigid body. Her intense, searching eyes. I can see them still. We were so naive back then. IQ tests were not able to read the intelligence of non speaking people.

I've read this book 5-6 times and have bought many copies for friends. Amazing what Ruth went through and how she tells her story. First time I have understood the world of the disabled. I think everyone should read this book. It's very inspiring to me to read what she went through. When I'm down and out, I read this book again.

This book is not only raw in detail, it is beautiful as well. I appreciated the part of the book where it describes how she was able to put thoughts onto paper. It follows her life prior to Belchertown also, so the reader gets to know Ruth and her family dynamic. Every chapter left me rushing to the next. Great read.

Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer is, in my estimation, one of the most remarkable women about whom I have ever read. Not only did she survive separation from a loving but misinformed family and the horrors of Belchertown State School, Mrs. Sienkiewicz-Mercer accomplished something seldom achieved by the institutionalized disabled. She not only left the institution, she rose high above it. In this book she uses her eyes to tell her story. I am saddened to report that Ruth Sienkiewicz-Mercer passed away in the summer of 1998. She never spoke her entire life but she will be sorely missed by those she reached with her words. Many thanks to Steven Kaplan for helping her tell her story.

For anyone who wonders why people who have disabilities fight so desperately against institutional

care, this book will show you why! Dehumanization, being cut off from friends and family, rejected by society, this book shows it all. Thank God that this book also describes the way out. Like Joseph, thrown in the pit, sold into slavery, and thought dead for years by his father; we will be free!

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