



Inspirational Nonfiction Books about People with Disabilities

To order any of these titles, contact the library by email, phone, mail, in person, or order through our [online catalog](#). Select titles can be [downloaded from BARD](#).

Breaking Barriers Working and Loving While Blind: a Memoir By Peter Altschul

Read by Jack Fox

Reading time 6 hours, 50 minutes

Autobiography of blind musician, composer, and social worker Altschul.

Describes his youth in New York state, education at Princeton University and the New England Conservatory, and career and marriage. Also discusses his experience obtaining dogs through the Guiding Eyes for the Blind. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Breaking Barriers Working and Loving While Blind](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076081

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly By Jean-Dominique Bauby

Read by Bruce Huntley

Reading time 2 hours, 4 minutes

A series of reminiscences by a paralyzed survivor of a massive stroke. A victim of "locked-in syndrome," he feels as if his body were inside a diving bell, while his mind can still "soar like a butterfly." He poignantly recalls a time when he took good health for granted, and he describes how hard it is to communicate when he can only blink his left eye. Bestseller.

[Download from BARD: The Diving Bell and the Butterfly](#)

Also available on cassette RC046844

Beyond the Bear: How I Learned to Live and Love Again After Being Blinded by a Bear By Dan Bigley

Read by Jeff Allin

Reading time 9 hours, 28 minutes

Author recounts being blinded during a near-fatal grizzly bear attack in Alaska in 2003 at age twenty-five. Details his recovery and his attendance at a center for the visually impaired. Discusses earning a master degree, changing careers, and reuniting with--and marrying--his girlfriend. Some strong language. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Beyond the Bear: How I Learned to Live Again...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076560

Spirit of Courage a Tribute to People with Disabilities By Paul Calandrino

Read by Bob Moore

Reading time 9 hours, 32 minutes

Laurel Burch is a well-known designer who has dealt with a bone disease since childhood. Here are her story and the stories of twenty-one other individuals with disabilities who have received the Laurel award for the "courageous and inspiring ways in which they have met the personal challenges in their lives."

[Download from BARD: Spirit of Courage a Tribute to People with...](#)

Also available on cassette RC042264

Partners in Independence a Success Story of Dogs and the Disabled By Edwin Eames

Read by Michele Schaeffer

Reading time 8 hours, 34 minutes

Accounts of disabled people whose lives have been enhanced by specially trained guide, hearing, and service dogs. Documents heroism as well as everyday deeds. The authors, who are visually impaired, also describe their own experiences with canine partners and chronicle the 1990s assistance dog movement. Revision of 1997 edition. 2004.

[Download from BARD: Partners in Independence a Success Story](#)

Also available on cassette RC058508

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR15603](#)

Also available in braille BR015603

Blind But Now I See: the Biography of Music Legend Doc Watson By Kent Gustavson

Read by Jack Fox

Reading time 10 hour, 54 minutes

Biography of blind Grammy Award-winning guitarist, songwriter, and singer Arthel "Doc" Watson (1923-2012) from Appalachian North Carolina. Explores his training at the Raleigh School for the Blind, rise during the 1960s folk revival, partnership with his son Merle, and the development of his flatpicking style of guitar playing. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Blind But Now I See: the Biography of Music...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076189

Thunder Dog: the True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust at Ground Zero By Michael Hingson

Read by Peter Ganim

Reading time 7 hours, 19 minutes

Michael Hingson, an executive who worked in the North Tower of the World Trade Center, recounts his escape after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Hingson, blind since birth, describes what he and his guide dog Roselle experienced as she led him down seventy-eight flights of stairs to safety. 2011.

[Download from BARD: Thunder Dog the True Story of a Blind Man, His...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073300

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19434](#)

Also available in braille BR019434

Miracle Boy Grows Up How the Disability Rights Revolution Saved my Sanity By Ben Mattlin

Read by Gary Tipton

Reading time 8 hours, 35 minutes

Writer and National Public Radio commentator's memoir of growing up with spinal muscular atrophy, a hereditary neurological disorder that causes progressive muscle weakness. Discusses his college career at Harvard (1980-84), his marriage, and fatherhood. Covers the disability rights movement and its effects on his life. Some strong language. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Miracle Boy Grows Up How the Disability Rights...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075556

Louis Braille A Touch of Genius By Michael C. Mellor

Read by Laura Giannarelli Reading time 8 hours, 15 minutes

Biography of Louis Braille (1809-1852), a blind Frenchman who by age sixteen designed a code of raised dots enabling blind people to read and write easily. Discusses his schooling, his love of music, and the advantages of his tactile reading system. For junior and senior high and older readers. 2006.

[Download from BARD: Louis Braille a Touch of Genius](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB063350

Also available on cassette RC063350

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR16790](#)

Also available in braille CBR07713

Undaunted by Blindness: Concise Biographies of 400 People who Refused to Let Visual Impairment Define Them By Clifford E. Olstrom

Read by Lou Harpenau Reading time 9 hours, 51 minutes

Director of the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind presents four hundred capsule biographies of notable blind people in various occupations and from different historical periods. Includes profiles of Irish composer Torlogh Carolan (1670-1738), American publisher Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911), and Cuban ballerina Alicia Alonso (b. 1921). 2010.

[Download from BARD: Undaunted by Blindness: Concise Biographies...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB072232

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19185](#)

Also available in braille BR019185

The Blind Doctor the Jacob Bolotin Story : a Biography By Rosalind Perlman

Read by John Haag Reading time 8 hours, 13 minutes

Biography of Chicago-born Jacob Bolotin (1888-1924), blind from birth. The author, whose husband was related to Bolotin, discusses Bolotin's determination to become a physician and describes the hard-won training that enabled him to practice medicine as a respected heart and lung specialist. Some strong language. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The Blind Doctor the Jacob Bolotin Story a...](#)

Also available on cassette RC064720

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR17270](#)

Also available in braille BR017270

Disabled, Female, and Proud! Stories of Ten Women with Disabilities By

Harilyn Rousso

Read by Nancy Kronenfeld Reading time 3 hours, 29 minutes

The author, a disabled psychiatric social worker and psychotherapist, profiles ten disabled women from a networking program she began so that disabled girls might learn from others' experiences. These women work in different fields and pursue varying lifestyles, but they prove that it is possible to lead a productive, satisfying life that overcomes stereotypes and prejudices.

[Download from BARD: Disabled, Female, and Proud! Stories of Ten...](#)

Also available on cassette RC035955

Surpassing Expectations My Life Without Sight By Lawrence Scadden

Read by Bill Wallace Reading time 9 hours, 24 minutes

Autobiography of California-born (1939) Scadden, who was blinded at age five. Describes his career as a research psychologist with a doctorate degree. Discusses his work in developing assistive technology for visually impaired people and promoting science education. Examines the effects of blindness, Scadden's personal development, and his experiences abroad. 2008.

[Download from BARD: Surpassing Expectations My Life Without Sight](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB068883

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR18597](#)

Also available in braille BR018597

Able Scientists--Disabled Persons Biographical Sketches Illustrating Careers in the Sciences for Able Disabled Students By S. Phyllis Stearner

Read by Phil Regensdorf Reading time 3 hours, 48 minutes

Biographical sketches of twenty-seven persons with disabilities who have become scientists. They share their experiences in the belief that they are typical of other disabled scientists and young people determined to become scientists. This book was sponsored by the Foundation for Science and the Handicapped, Inc.

[Download from BARD: Able Scientists—Disabled Persons Biographical...](#)

Also available on cassette RC022753

Also available in braille BR006176

Seeing Lessons 14 Life Secrets I've Learned Along the Way by Tom Sullivan

Read by Peter Johnson Reading time 6 hours, 3 minutes
Motivational speaker and author of If You Could See What I Hear (RC 35991) offers advice on living with purpose, passion, and fulfillment. Sullivan, blind since birth, interweaves personal experiences with reflections on lessons learned, including turning disadvantages into advantages, facing fears, and creating a life plan. 2003.

[Download from BARD: Seeing Lessons 14 Life Secrets I've Learned...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB063861

Also available on cassette RC063861

Joni an Unforgettable Story By Joni Eareckson Tada

Read by Elisabeth Rodgers Reading time 6 hours, 40 minutes
Tada, paralyzed from the neck down by a diving accident in 1967, shares her struggle--what she calls an "incredible adventure"--to adjust to her disability. Describes overcoming, through faith in God, her physical and emotional challenges and even becoming a skillful artist by using her mouth to guide her pen. 1976.

[Download from BARD: Joni an Unforgettable Story](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB066076

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR17654](#)

Also available in braille BR017654

Winning the Disability Challenge a Practical Guide to Successful Living By John F. Tholen

Read by Gary Tipton Reading time 6 hours, 51 minutes
Psychologist presents strategies and solutions to help disabled individuals adjust psychologically and emotionally after becoming occupationally impaired. Uses success stories from his clients to illustrate that accomplishments and enjoyment of life can continue. Offers positive affirmations, relationship suggestions, and practical information on government benefits. 2008.

[Download from BARD: Winning the Disability Challenge a Practical...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB066824

Life Without Limits: Inspiration for a Ridiculously Good Life By Nick Vujicic

Read by Guy Williams

Reading time 8 hours, 43 minutes

Motivational speaker uses himself as an example of the power of unconditional love and self-acceptance. He describes growing up without arms or legs and having self-pity turn into total enjoyment of life with the help of faith. Discusses the work he does worldwide. Includes his "ridiculous rules." 2010.

[Download from BARD: Life Without Limits: Inspiration for a Ridiculously...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB072475