



# **Rebooting My Brain: How a Freak Aneurysm Reframed My Life**

*Maria Ross*

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## **Rebooting My Brain: How a Freak Aneurysm Reframed My Life** Maria Ross

Rebooting My Brain is the true story of what happens when you get yanked out of your life by a crisis and have to get back on the ride all over again. With refreshing candor, Maria Ross shares how the relentless pace of her life came to a screeching halt when an undetected brain aneurysm ruptured and nearly killed her. Along her stubborn road back to health, her resulting cognitive and emotional challenges forced her sometimes kicking and screaming to reframe her life, her work and her identity. With humor and heart, Ross shares what it was like being blind for six weeks, how a TV crime drama and a brain-games website played key roles in her recovery, and why a handmade necklace helped her regain her sense of self. Ross reveals the keys to her extraordinary comeback and how her perspective is forever changed, mostly for the better. Funny, touching and real, this book not only shares an inspirational story of transformation but enlightens readers about the surprising effects of brain injury... and explores the question, "How do our brains define who we are?"

## **Rebooting My Brain: How a Freak Aneurysm Reframed My Life Details**

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**Maria Ross**

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# **From Reader Review Rebooting My Brain: How a Freak Aneurysm Reframed My Life for online ebook**

## **Liz says**

Everyone who's dealt with my life over the last year and a half ought to read this. I can't express how much I related to it. Really emotional read for me, which says a lot I think.

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## **Barbara says**

Very inspirational and factual non-fiction story about a woman in her 30s who reframes her life after a brain aneurysm. Easy read and very informative for both patient and family to better understand what happens when someone suffers a brain injury - the event, medical care, recovery, references, support groups and websites. Definitely worth reading.

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## **Jack says**

This book brought back memories for me, both good and bad, of my own experience of sub-arachnoid haemorrhage two years ago. Like the author, I'm lucky to be alive and back at work, and lucky to have a supportive husband (and two rescue dogs). It reminded me, when she refers to health insurance, that I'm also lucky to live in a country with a national health service. I would recommend this book to anyone with a friend or relative who is going through this experience.

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## **Cindy says**

This is an excellent book for anyone with a brain injury, not just an aneurysm. It tells how difficult it can be to survive a rupture and how to get your life back. Maria went through many ups and downs. What drew me to this book is our family history of aneurysms. We have had 6 members of our family with them. I was very fortunate that mine was found before it ruptured. Not all of our family has been so lucky!

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## **Candy says**

I was provided a copy of this book and asked to review it. Because it was such a unique topic and one I was very interested in, I read it pretty quickly. I didn't know a whole lot about aneurysms but from what I knew of them, I thought they were pretty much debilitating and were nearly impossible to recover from.

I was surprised by this author's candor and ability to share her journey so openly. She welcomes in to her life, both pre and post aneurysm and walks us through what she felt like. I felt most connected to her when she was talking about what her work life was like after. As a small business owner myself, this is one of my worst nightmares... what happens if something happens to me? What about my family? How will they deal

with that? How will I?

I like that she doesn't have all the answers. I like that she got angry. I like that she got sad. I like that she got frustrated. What I liked the most is that she was able to find her way back. Maybe not exactly where she left off, but to a new life. To a new path. I think that's a testament to who she is and who she is to become. My hats off to her.

The book is well edited and formatted. A dream for someone that reads a lot of self-published works. I wish all were as well done.

My only reservation is that I felt we were missing some hole in her story. I don't really know what that hole is or what part of her life, but there did appear to be some gap there. It doesn't take away from the story and, of course, it may be that she chose to leave it out. Not entirely helpful since I can't place it, but it still nags me a bit.

Overall, this is a great book. I love memoirs and they are my favorite genre. This one did not disappoint, but also gave me a lot insight into something I didn't know a whole lot about. I liked that she was able to entertain while informing. Well done, indeed.

Recommended for anyone that likes memoirs and those who want to learn something about brain injuries.

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## **Therese says**

On August 4, 2008 Maria Ross suffered a critical and nearly deadly aneurysm. With things being in the right place at the right time, etc. she was able to make an incredible recovery whereas many other people haven't, at least not to the degree that she has. She credits her husband, their insurance (Microsoft), living location, and friends and family for tremendous support, all of which were crucial.

I have never had a brain injury, but I have been through a life changing injury in the form of a spinal cord injury. Surprisingly enough I could relate to a lot of what she wrote about even though our stories are completely different. I don't have the support, insurance, etc. that she did, and my life didn't get back to "normal." Hers didn't either, but we both created new and different ways of working with what we were both left with.

Like her, I was determined to get better and was in denial for a very long time. I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing, and God knows she did much better at accepting her circumstances than I did. At least I came around...

It is a remarkable story of recovery against all odds, and while some of the medical stuff lost me, her wit and sarcasm got a little old at times. She prided herself on being a type A personality, and never let you forget that she was a redheaded Italian. I don't feel that these had much to do with the story, but I think she has done a good service for people who have been through brain injuries and/or anyone who knows someone who has.

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## **Christine says**

This was a very quick read. I only picked it up 3 times and it was done. It's pretty straight to the point and while the topic could have been very emotionally engaging this book did not have a lot of emotion to it. With a few exceptions, Maria pretty much just tells the story as if she was talking about any other ordinary day. It is well written but without any unnecessary details which is why it's a very quick read and emotionally detached. I love reading memoirs about amazing times in a person's life. I like to be drawn in and personally engaged in what will happen to the person next. And while I rooted for Maria's recovery I didn't shed a tear or have more than a couple of laughs at what she was describing. She just didn't get me hooked into her life. The book was interesting and I appreciate her reason for writing it. I do think a lot of people with brain injuries or their families could benefit from this book. Her continued optimism throughout the book does make an impact but this was not the tear jerker memoir I was hoping for.

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## **Jennifer D. Munro says**

This is a highly-readable and engaging book about the after-effects of a brain injury--a brain injury that is completely unexpected for a healthy, young, fit, energetic woman who is not engaged in a risky activity (like motorcycling) or is not involved in a car accident. In other words, it could happen to any of us or to our loved ones, and this book will be a gift to those who are seeking understanding about the bewildering behaviors and challenges that can result from head injuries. I think this book might also be a great source of inspiration for those who are struggling. I was so glad that the author mentioned the number of veterans who are returning from combat regions with head injuries, because I think there's a dearth of understanding out there for these men and women who will face such a tough time integrating back into society. I can't imagine how the author managed to write this book so soon after her aneurysm (how can someone with a brain injury even spell "aneurysm?"--I have to look it up every time!). Hats off to her (but, as she says, keep those bicycle helmets on!).

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## **Jan Rog says**

Reading narratives or explanations of personal healing, I treat texts as if I were in conversation with the author. Throughout my first time with this book, I slowed down to write my own reflections and then questions for the author: How has your work as an actress been enhanced or harmed by this? Do you have moments when you freeze? How do you deal with scattered ideas or incoherent days? I do not ask existential questions like "Why?" as so many advise me to do. Instead, I "let" the others share their stories as they wish, focusing on the types of questions that they need to address. I appreciated Ross's honesty. She shares pain and frustration, and then she provides real-life examples we can relate to even if we have not directly enacted them. In terms of the book's layout, I admire her thorough explanations of not only her personal experiences but also of medical terms. She provides a list of terms for us all to learn and use in (hopefully) meaningful dialogue. For too long we were taught to not talk about mental challenges that come with trauma of any form. For too long we have been afraid to seem rude or intrusive because we have not learned ways of communicating about delicate subjects. Well, this book is one of many which can help us begin such conversations. Neither defeatist or maudlin in tone, Ross's story is refreshing. Should I have the opportunity to meet her or hear her speak, I look forward to asking her questions in person.

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## Dee says

An Amazing Book about Surviving "Annie"

OMG!! As an aneurism survivor, THIS is the book I have been waiting for! If you have had a rupture and have recovered sufficiently to be able to read (or as in my case, listen), get Maria Ross' fine book and a box of tissues. After you dry your eyes, share it with those around you. If you are not the "lucky" one in 3,000 who has suffered an aneurism (or "annie" in survivor-speak), but know someone with a brain injury, you should also read it. Frustrated with a survivor's behavioral changes? You absolutely need to READ this book. Rebooting My Brain is an extended public service announcement describing and explaining the major life changes of survivors of brain injury, especially for those of us who have suffered an aneurism a.k.a. hemorrhagic stroke: a ruptured blood vessel that bleeds into the brain.

Ms. Ross articulately describes the physical, emotional, cognitive and metaphysical changes brought on by a traumatic brain injury (TBI), and not just by a ruptured aneurism. Although the author apologizes for her extended meditations on the brain and the self, these were amazing "aha!" moments for me. Clearly, I am not the only one to have thought about how my injury has changed me and what that means to those who know and love me. I want to buy Ms. Ross a cup of decaffeinated coffee and spend an afternoon in deep conversation about these things, as well as survivor guilt, depression and compensatory strategies. Annie survivors active in both brick-and-mortar as well as social media groups, could do worse than using Rebooting My Brain as the source of fruitful and illuminating discussions. We survivors are two-thirds there: we GET that no one understands our challenges like another survivor. But, oh, to have the language ~ a challenge for so many of us left with word-finding issues! A treasure! A road map! A BFF! Someone who gets why we behave as we do.

I know that there are folks, certainly some in my world, that say the book gives us annie survivors and other TBIs an excuse for any number of things that might be ascribed to old age, laziness, malingering, anything other than our injury. Ms. Ross addresses this head-on, so to speak. It doesn't really matter. This is who the survivor is, RIGHT NOW. While it may or may not be brain damage that causes a survivor's behavioral changes, it is NOT a leaky sink that is now repaired. Particularly for those of us blessed with no observable physical symptoms, we are inherently different, either due to our brush with death or brain bleed or some other unknown reason. Deal with it. And give us the respect of acknowledging that this difference, even if not obvious from the outside, is a huge screaming chasm for us survivors between "then" and "now." I am, indeed, Dee v2.0 and that is my reality.

A fabulous resource.

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## Monica Tomasello says

This is a memoir about Ms. Ross's remarkable recovery from an aneurysm that nearly took her life and should be a handbook for anyone who has ever had a brain injury. But it also resonated with me, an amputee and one who also had a close family member who suffered a brain injury. Truly anyone who has endured a life altering illness or injury can glean much from her experiences. I would also recommend it for anyone who has a friend or a family member who has/is going through a brain or traumatic injury as well as those in

the medical field who deal with these patients.

Ms. Ross shares the medical details, but more importantly, the emotions she went through as a vibrant woman who has to relearn things we all take for granted and construct a new life based on the person she became-not better or worse, just different.

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### **Mandie Crago says**

This is an amazing book!!!! I was born with a brain defect and I could relate so much to her story and struggles!!! I also have a shunt and was diagnosed with hydrocephalus.....but I was diagnosed before birth.....She really made you feel her struggles and pain.....she also made you really feel the feelings she had with all the people who helped her and everything g that was going on in her life.

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### **Sandi says**

An easy and inspiring read. Maria speaks honestly and with alot of humour and insight into her struggle to face an uncertain future following a sudden brain aneurysm that left her cognitively impaired and (for a short while) blind.

What I got most out of this book was hearing about her struggle to let go of her "old me" and embrace the "new me" with all it's (brain injury) limitations, and the freedom this gave her.

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### **Diana says**

An interesting & very honest book about the aftermath of a brain aneurysm. At times, a little grating, but the victim's husband deserves all the credit for putting their life back together.

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### **Jeanne says**

This was a free Kindle download from Amazon. It started out great, a real page turner. But it bogged down after the initial life changing frenzy of the aneurysm. I lost interest about 2/3 of the way through the book.

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