



Straight Talk

By Muriel Sluyter

"Back in Action" and how

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Greetings, Gentle Reader,

There is a book out, "Back In Action," the reading of which could enlighten every American on many fronts. In it Captain David Rozelle tells the story of his childhood, his military service—including in Iraq—his injury, requiring the amputation of most of his foot, his recovery, dealing with the drug addiction caused by treatment with morphine and other drugs, and finally, his return to army duty.

It truly is an astonishing saga. In this book, you meet a man with a powerful personality; a man who loves his country and is determined to serve it; a man whose response to the question by anti-war Americans, "How do you feel about the war?" is always: "How do you feel about your freedom? If you aren't willing to die for it, then you aren't an American."

Of his flight West after being released from Walter Reed Hospital, he writes, "People applauded me as I passed through security. Everyone looked at me with pride. Nobody looked at me like a cripple, but as a war hero. I was proud, but tired."

On the plane, Capt. Rozelle sat next to Senator John Kerry, who told him that he, too, was a veteran. Then the Senator told the injured soldier he didn't support the war, but he did appreciate Rozelle's sacrifice. The Captain's reaction was telling: he said not another word to Kerry for the remainder of the flight. He simply leaned back and went to sleep.

His response to his morphine addiction is illuminating, because he allows his reader to see how he behaved during that period. He doesn't hide the negative thinking and acting, the self-pity. Because he is so straight forward, by nature, he admitted to himself that he was addicted, and worse, that he was incapable of living without the drugs. Even with them, the pain was excruciating.

As he describes and explains his condition, he admits that he spent his time lying on the couch and crying. He read his mail voraciously, but that's really all he did do. He knew he was being unfair to his wife, because he simply

shut her out of his life, but he couldn't seem to break the cycle of pain, drugs, misery, selfishness, and a sense of worthlessness.

Then a letter he had written to his wife prior to his injury finally arrived at their home. Reading that letter, he saw the difference between what he had been before his injury and what he had become since then. The change was so obvious, so profound, it caused him to pull himself up by his bootstraps, so to speak. He called his doctor, who told him to take himself off the drugs slowly. Being a man who makes his own decisions—as is obvious to anyone reading his book—he decides to go cold turkey. He did, but he says he almost killed himself in the process.

He knew he had to get a strong grip on his body, once again. He trained hard everyday, no matter how much it hurt, and it paid off. He recovered his confidence and sense of determination. Even better, he recovered his sense of personal value.

Now, he is back on full duty, yet, no one, reading the report of his thinking and behavior while on the drugs he needed, could have expected him to reach the level of self-assurance and control needed to return to active duty, much less to return to the war that cost him most of his foot.

Even a man of this caliber, a man with such strength of mind, spirit, and body, can be taken down by drugs to a point of pulling within himself and sitting on the couch and crying. If drugs can almost destroy a man as strong as this—and they can—they can destroy anyone.

This book is worth reading.

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