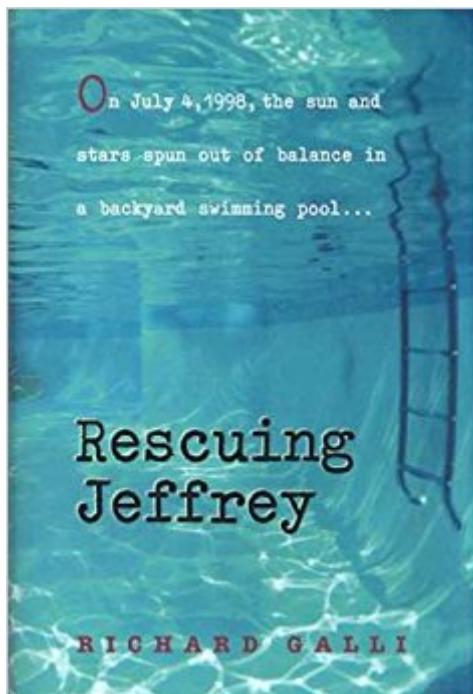


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# Rescuing Jeffrey



## Synopsis

On a perfect sunny July 4th afternoon, Richard Galli and his family were celebrating the holiday at the home of some friends. The kids were playing in the pool, and the grown-ups were relaxing. Then the unthinkable happened. Galli's seventeen-year-old son, Jeffrey, dove into the pool, struck his head, and nearly drowned. Although Galli saved his son's life, Jeffrey was paralyzed with a devastating spinal cord injury. Rescuing Jeffrey is a compelling look at the next ten days. In this disarmingly honest account, Galli wrestles with a horrible predicament: Should he let his son live as a quadriplegic, unable to move or breathe on his own? Or should Galli "rescue" his son again-this time by removing Jeffrey's life support? Galli weighs this question with intelligence and stark emotional intensity. For ten days he struggles to comprehend a future he never imagined for his son. During those ten days two parents are forced to make the most difficult decision of their lives. "I had brought my son back to life," Galli writes, "and then I had to find a way to kill him." Although Galli assumes the burden of choosing death for his minor son, convincing others that the decision is correct, in the end that decision is taken away. Battered by bad luck, shock, and medication, unable even to lift a finger, Jeffrey finds the power to make the decision himself. Rescuing Jeffrey is a bluntly eloquent story about tragedy and love and the choices we make at the brink of survival. It is a story that asks what, after all, is a life worth living?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Galli's moving account of a family tragedy unfolds as an existential life-or-death drama. At age 17, on July 4, 1998, his son, Jeffrey, dived into a backyard swimming pool, nearly drowned and

severely damaged his spinal column; the boy was completely paralyzed from the neck down. Faced with the prognosis that Jeff would probably spend his future in a wheelchair and on a respirator, requiring round-the-clock care, Galli, who's a lawyer, and his wife, Toby, initially were strongly inclined to remove their son's life supportAand Jeff himself told his parents he wanted to die. One doctor at the hospital believed that ending Jeff's life was unthinkable, but other doctors disagreed, and at the Gallis' request the hospital began the review process that could have led to approval of the decision to terminate the boy's life. But within days Jeff had a change of heart; meanwhile, Galli, having read inspirational books by recent quadriplegics Christopher Reeve and Travis Roy, and having weighed the options, reversed his position of being "a strong advocate for Jeffrey's death." This gut-wrenchingly candid book, which focuses on the first 11 days of the Gallis' ordeal, is likely to arouse controversy and sharply divided reactions, especially since the Gallis, in the first agonizing days before Jeff regained speech, were willing to make the live-or-die decision without informing their paralyzed son. Yet this eloquent story of heartbreak and hope is ultimately life-affirming. Jeff, who graduates from high school this spring, transformed his father, who ruefully notes: "In the end [Jeff] even managed to push aside the only force that was actually strong enoughAor weak enoughAto kill him: his dad." BOMC featured selection; author tour. (June.-- even managed to push aside the only force that was actually strong enoughAor weak enoughAto kill him: his dad." BOMC featured selection; author tour. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

YA-In one terrible instant, on July 4, 1998, the lives of the Galli family changed forever. Their 17-year-old son dove into a pool and broke his neck when his head hit the bottom. So begins the account of the next 10 days in Jeffrey's life as told by his father. When the Gallis were informed that their son's fracture had resulted in quadriplegia, their world crumbled. As doctors, specialists, social workers, and clergy tried to explain the future that Jeffrey was facing, his parents started to consider another possibility. Perhaps life under those conditions was not the best choice for their son-maybe the best option for Jeffrey was death. This is an honest and heartrending account of a family facing a dire reality. The author discusses the facts of life for a quadriplegic: the dependency on a ventilator; the inability to feed, wash, or even scratch oneself; the total reliance on someone else for every bodily need. As Jeffrey is reeling through the first days, his parents quietly continue their quest for legal permission to end his life if they so decide. Young adults seldom consider how radically their lives can change in a split second of misfortune. This book will strongly point out that possibility, but, more importantly, it reinforces the strength of the human spirit, the will to live, and the compassion of one's friends and neighbors. Rescuing Jeffrey, like the story of Christopher

Reeves to which the author often refers, shows how overwhelming tragedy can be borne with dignity and grace. Carol DeAngelo, Kings Park Library, Burke, VA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If ever a book forced a reader to consider the vagaries of life, and what life is all about, this is it. Moreover, I thought that Mr. Galli had an excellent writing style, straightforward, muscular and unflinching, just right for this incredibly sad story. I also thought that the notes of support from the Galli's friends and acquaintances were a real addition to the book. They show us not only the meaning of what it is to have close friends, but perhaps as importantly, how people instinctly can pull together to support and rally around those who they may not even count as close friends, but who are mere acquaintances. I did have a few very minor quibbles. One is that I was surprised that there was hardly any discussion whatsoever about how the accident actually happened. All we are basically told is that Jeffrey dove into a pool and hit his head. Well if I dive into the deep end of a 10-foot pool, I'm not going to hit my head, so that is obviously not what happened here. But what did happen? Did he "dive" into the shallow end. That doesn't seem so likely. Did he not know how deep it was? Did he not stick his arms out to break the fall? I recognize that the "how" is not the point of the book, but I would have expected to see at least a paragraph or two as to exactly what happened (or even to tell the reader that they don't actually know what happened). Second, while I thoroughly admired the way in which Mr. Galli dealt with this tragedy, I found his own self-regard somewhat off-putting. I don't mean this in the sense of how thoughts or emotions or acts in terms of Jeff's situation per se. Rather, it seemed as if, when dealing with aspects of his life not directly involving Jeff (i.e the author's pre-accident life), I felt that he was not lacking in self-praise as to his panoply of talents. I could be wrong about that of course, but that was the sense I had. Despite that, I still feel that the book is a real achievement and Jeff is lucky to have such a father.

When a tragedy such as the one Richard Galli experienced in his family occurs, the family is expected to nod in agreement at platitudes from well-meaning acquaintances such as , "At least he's still alive." But sometimes we're not truly glad our loved one is alive. Sometimes our love is so deep and the prognosis is so bad that we want to say, "NO!" But it is rare to have the courage to admit it if our society would be more comfortable otherwise. Richard Galli obviously shared his feelings with rare honesty. He didn't tell a sappy story that would make us feel better. He told the truth. It is apparent that he didn't write for the popular commercial success, but for more personal and intimate reasons. Those who dare to read it with an open heart can benefit from his bravery in sharing his

thoughts and feelings with no regard for what anyone not in his situation might think.

This is a compassionate and compelling story, a must for everyone to read. I admire Mr. Galli and would never want to be in his shoes. I wept while I read, identifying very much as I have sons and he lets you know just how in a minute your world can change drastically. A must read for everyone. This is a poignant story, one everyone should read. When so many people gripe and complain about their so-called ailments, this book makes it very clear that but for the grace of God, there go I. Definitely worth purchasing! I recommend it to everyone.

I came very close to weeping when I heard Mr. Galli on the radio talking about rescuing Jeffrey. I had to get to work and didn't hear the end and so am buying the book to read. Will critique again then. I know it will be excellent reading, just listening to his father speak was emotional for me as I am a parent with three sons and would be devastated if in his place. Obviously a must reading.

great product

Reading Rescuing Jeffrey is almost like seeing a bad accident on the side of the interstate. You don't want to look, but you do. In this case, please do. While I often had to read through copious tears, it is a fascinating story written by someone who holds your attention despite your already knowing the ending. And, by reading, you find the truth: that one's mind and one's heart are the essence of the person . . . not what they can do. Jeffrey is the hero of this story. He decides, while everyone else agonizes, that he will live. This story will break your heart and then, slowly, as you think about it, heal it again.

On July 4, 1998, 17-year-old Jeffrey Galli dove into a swimming pool. When he didn't emerge, his friends ran for help, and Jeffrey's mother and father pulled him from the pool and saved his life; subsequently they learn that he has been paralyzed from the neck down and will spend his life dependent on a ventilator for his breathing. In this memoir of the first ten days of Jeffrey's accident and hospitalization, his father recreates the immense sadness, the horror, and the gut-wrenching decisions that his family faced. Chief among these was his own conviction that the most humane choice they could make was to turn off the ventilator and let Jeffery die in order to spare him a life robbed of any independent physical activity and without the potential to pursue their vision of a happy life. When Jeffrey awakes and is able to communicate--and has no brain damage--they

rethink their decision and recognize there is more to being alive than having a body. The family's struggle to decide on the best course of action for their son is the main focus of this book, and is presented so well that the reader feels the anguish of this horrible choice: to determine whether to keep your child alive, knowing that he will live completely wheelchair bound and dependent on others for the most basic care, or elect to let him die and live with that decision for life (and face the possibility that in the future a cure will be discovered). Perhaps the most moving sections were when Jeffrey awoke each day and had to face his paralysis anew--his father there to explain to him time and again the circumstances and consequences of the accident. An incredibly moving read about parenthood and life--I dare you to read it without crying.

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