

# The Other Survivor

Head Injury from a Wife's  
Perspective

Barbara Janet Cooper

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Wife's Perspective  
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# With Love

In loving memory: to my parents,  
Alexandra Mary Uzwiak Cooper and  
Eugene Joseph Cooper.

To my beautiful family and friends  
for their prayers and words of  
encouragement.

To my brother, David, who gave of  
himself and was always near by when  
I needed him.

To my sister-in-law, Marge, who  
provided cab service with love to get  
us to the many doctor appointments.

And last but not least: in honor and  
loving memory of Sister Bernadette  
Muller whose friendship, prayers, and  
encouragement has made this journey  
bearable.

*“From one moment to the next an accident changed their lives, and Barbara became a victim’s care giver. Totally unprepared for her new role—who is?*

*The author plunged into the abyss of sadness and resentment at being a victim herself. She slowly learned to cope with the seemingly superhuman task of caring for the new stranger in the house she once knew as another person.*

*The chapters of this book reveal the source of Barbara’s strength not only to survive but to become a loving care giver. In these pages she shares her insights and*

*experiences and faith with readers who themselves have encountered similar challenges or know someone who has. I am certain those readers will find Barbara's thoughts both helpful and encouraging."*

Eugene J. Cooper, Dr. Theology

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# Forward

*“The work of the late Swiss psychiatrist Elisabeth Kuebler-Ross has shown that grief and bereavement takes place in a number of stages affecting loved ones of the infirm, the dead, the dying or the terminally ill alike.*

*In her account of the experience that changed her life following the head injury of her husband, Barbara candidly summarizes these stages as well as giving insight into the profound lack of communication between medical staff and family members which – unfortunately – is not uncommon*

*and quite often reflects insecurity and fear of emotions present on both sides.*

*Barbara Cooper takes us through the harrowing experience of her husband's profound personality change following work-related head injury which resulted in the sudden necessity of role changes and organizational adjustment. She illustrates the stages of realization of the impact this injury has had not only on her husband's life, but also on that of his family without making a secret of the fact that the rate of marital breakdown following such an event is very high.*

*This very personal report of a shattering biographic milestone will be a valuable help to family members and loved ones as well as medical staff and self-help groups as it demonstrates the need for more in-hospital support given by social workers, priests, doctors and the infirm and the families: the other survivors."*

Déirdre Cooper-Mahkorn:  
Neurologist  
Bonn University Hospital, Germany

# Introduction

In the year 1952, a child darts across a busy street to buy candy and a car sends him hurling into the air splitting his head from ear to ear. The doctors patch the child's head with steel plates. He is not expected to make it. The local priest is summoned to perform "last rights" for this child and by a miracle he survives and after his stay at the hospital he returns home.

Returning to school the family finds that this child is having a difficult time learning to read and to write. As he gets a little older he