



BOOK REVIEW

Lessons From A CF Cornerman:

**38 Lessons I Learned During My Wife's Illness
And Lung Transplant**

By Raymond L. Poole

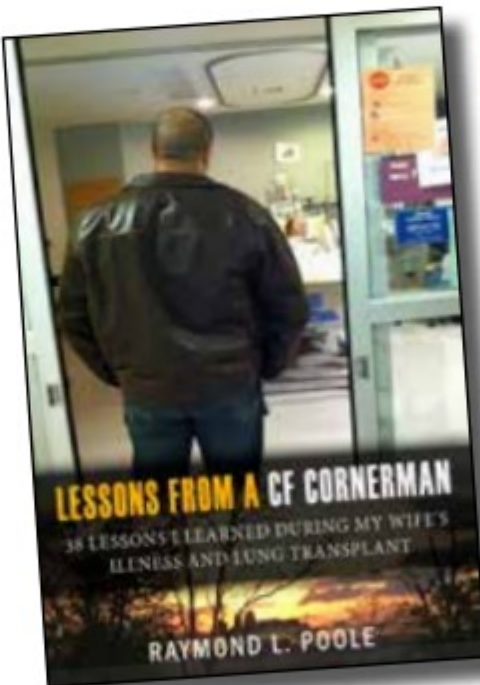
Reviewed by Piper Beatty Welsh

As a married, two-time bilateral-lung transplant recipient with cystic fibrosis, I'll admit that I sat down to read Raymond L. Poole's *Lessons from a CF Cornerman* with some degree of trepidation. Living with CF and transplant can often seem overwhelming enough on its own - did I really want to dive headfirst into another couple's experience with "my" disease?

It took about ten pages of reading for me to answer that question with a resounding "Yes!" Poole's book follows him and his wife Rebecca, as they meet, fall in love, learn to negotiate life with her CF as a couple, then face new challenges together when she experiences a sudden decline and listing for bilateral-lung transplant. Rebecca's story - and Poole's expert narration of it from his perspective as husband, caretaker and, well, "cornerman" - is at once both completely unique and heart achingly relatable.

For a reader outside the CF community, this is an inspirational read about love for better or for worse (and sometimes through even worse than that!) in sickness and in health. For those of us within it, the book has added dimension,

reflecting back on us the raw truths of CF through a candid and sometimes humorous lens. Through this book, we are treated to unique insights about life with CF from "the other side" of the



marital aisle. Poole takes us from the halls of the college where he and his wife met, down the roads of their early relationship and marriage, into the grim world of the ICU, through the operating room and back out again. All with an

unshakeable narrative voice that somehow manages to be both brutal and comforting. Scattered along the way are the many invaluable lessons (38 of them, to be exact) that he took home with him. And although some of these insights made me squirm (note to readers: please do not try to pull a PICC line at home in your bathroom to go on a business trip!), every single one of them was meaningful, personal and, above all, honest. Because at the end of the day, that is Cornerman's greatest lesson to all of us: that honesty, love and a willingness to adapt to new circumstances are our best weapons not just in the fight against CF but in everything we do.

Perhaps the best review I can give of this book, however, is not in my words but in my actions. So absorbed was I in this read that I barely put it down from start to finish, despite the tears, smiles and laughter I experienced along the way. And this afternoon I gave the book to my husband - my very own transplant and "CF cornerman" - for him to read. I can't wait to hear what lessons he learns, too. ▲

Piper is 35 and has CF. She is a former director of USACFA.