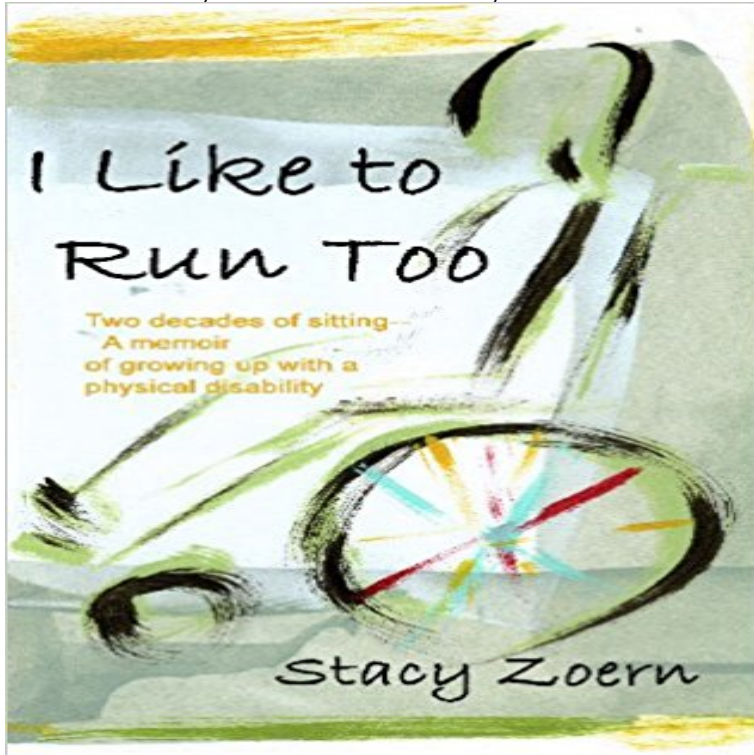


## I Like to Run Too: Two Decades of Sitting. A Memoir of Growing Up with a Physical Disability



Stacy Zoern lives in Austin, Texas, where she moved from Houston eight years ago to attend college. She received her B.A. in philosophy and psychology from the University of Texas and then went on to get a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law. She is now practicing law for an intellectual property firm, and handling disability discrimination cases on the side.\*\*\*\*\*Having a disability has meant a life filled with difficulties. It is almost every day that I face a new challenge, an obstacle, an ignorant, prejudiced person, a physical barrier, or an unjust situation having to do with my disability. On bad days, I encounter more than one of these. I always have a disability, every moment of every day, and it affects everything I do on some level. Whether I am following the ramped course to class on my college campus, deciding where to go for lunch, or just going around in public, where everyone always stares at me, my disability is in the back of my mind. I wrote the following because I want to share my experiences with people who have disabilities so they can relate, but also with people who have never had a disability or perhaps never even known anyone with one, so they can understand. Even if we, as human beings, were only to have a slight understanding of each other, our interactions would be exponentially more fruitful than if we were to remain submersed in ignorance. My roommate was at a party not long ago and was talking to a guy when I came up in the conversation. When she told him that she helped me and further, when the conversation led to the camp for children with disabilities that she volunteers at, he replied that she must be a good Samaritan, he could never hang around handicapped people so much. I dont know who he is, or how widely those feelings reach across the population, but I have to do what I can to change that attitude. The other day

someone was parked in front of the ramp at my dorm and I had to go all the way down the street to get up the curb. When I came back around, the girls who had blocked the ramp were just getting into their car. I went up to their window and told them that I had just gone all the way down the street because they had blocked the ramp, the ramp right next to the HUGE sign that says DO NOT BLOCK RAMP. They apologized and when I turned around, my parents, who were still across the street unloading the van, saw the girls start to laugh. Was something funny? Please God, do not tell me that is my place in this world. It is also important to me that I make something very clear to everyone reading about my life. The events that I talk about, despite what they may seem, are not unfortunate. Though I have wished at times to experience some of the things that I am missing, I have never regretted having a disability. Just like everything else about me, my disability has in part made me who I am. I think about the things that have happened in my life solely because of my disability, and I know that my life would be a completely different one if I spent it walking around. I wouldn't want a completely different life. Life is difficult and sometimes filled with tragedy. It is pointless to complain about the things that go wrong because the ideal picture of life that many people hold on to isn't really what life is at all. These wrongs are life. Though mine may be filled with a disability, it is also filled with love, ambition, and hope. What I hope for mostly is to help people see disability differently. Truthfully, I can't help but to smile about most of the obstacles I encounter. My family and I have spent many hours in hysterical laughter about the situations we find ourselves in. So, I suppose in a way, the things in my life that arise because of my disability are a form of entertainment. So be informed, be given a new perspective, and be entertained.

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