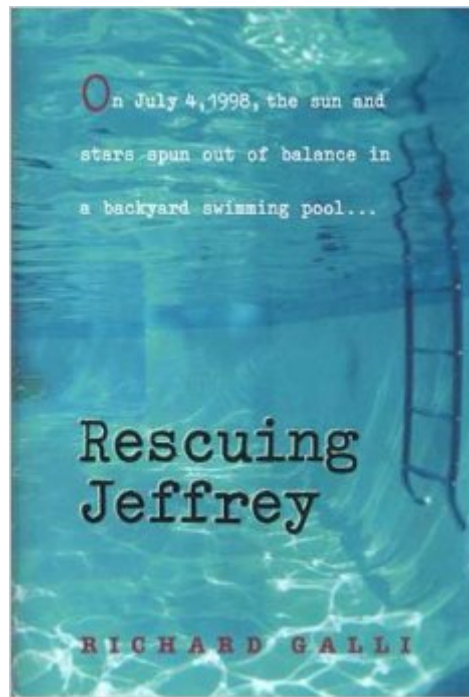


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# Rescuing Jeffrey



## 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

I read *Tuesdays With Morrie* and was moved by the thought of a relationship rekindled - at a time when it still had a chance to matter to both individuals. I read *Rescuing Jeffrey* and was moved by

much more than that. With riveting eloquence, one dad shares with all of us his horrific struggle to do what he thinks is best for his terribly injured son. Galli does not ask for our understanding or our support. He simply tells his story with brutal honesty. The book grabs you and takes you on an emotional journey from which you truly emerge a different person. You cannot put this book down, your tears wet the pages as you turn them, but you rejoice in Jeffrey Galli's own declaration that he wants to continue life's journey - even with the cards that now have been dealt him. While Galli argues with the system for the right to end his son's life, his account of those ten days reveals too many points along the way where he actually is searching for reasons to let that decision be Jeffrey's. In the end, Galli recognizes that, too. He probably knew it all along. He just was lucky enough to have a son who reminded him of it when it counted the most. This is a life-affirming narrative of the first order.

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.

I thought *Rescuing Jeffrey* was a very honest story about when life deals you a rotten hand. Having gone through my own experience with my son who came down with Bacterial Meningitis and was left unable to move or speak at the age of 14 I can truly understand how Richard Galli was feeling. Not everything that goes through your mind is always pleasant. You are in store for so many things that you probably never thought you would have to deal with. *Rescuing Jeffrey* made me cry because nobody knows how hard it is when it is your child. A very moving book.

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.

A year after I sustained a spinal cord injury myself, I read Richard and Jeffrey Galli's story. I could relate to many of Richard's thoughts. He questioned Jeffrey's quality of life and wasn't sure if he wanted his son to live helplessly. I can truly say I hated some of Galli's opinions and statements... but the more I thought about it, the more they made sense. Galli speaks the truth; the brutal truth. He doesn't butter it up, but tells it how it is. At times I would get so discouraged that I made myself put the book down. I couldn't stay away long though. Galli frustrated me, brought me to tears, made me smile, and made me think. A good read for anyone who is in a similar position or knows someone who is. I admire Jeffrey's courage.

This book is worth reading. It is a sad story, and unfortunately, a miracle does not occur at the ending, but is so good nonetheless. At times I could not even read more than a page because the images of Jeffrey in his hospital bed were so vivid that I began to cry. I agree with the other reviewer who said the true hero is Jeffrey. I think you should read this book because Jeffrey Galli's story will change your life. I can honestly say that it has changed mine.

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