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## ***Book Review***

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**"Climb Every Mountain: Radhika's Story".** Ed. Indeera Chand, Harpin Collins Publishers, Pages 210, Price Rs. 145.

This is a non medical book, written by a house wife. It is being reviewed in a pediatrics journal because its message is of great importance to the pediatricians and some of their patients. Down syndrome constitutes almost one third of the diagnosable causes of mental retardation. Most pediatricians when approached by the parent are liable to say "There is no treatment for this disease". While it is true, that no medicine can correct the chromosomal defect underlying the disorder, yet a lot can be done to transform their lives. This book tells how. There is a great paucity of books in this field especially from the point of view of bringing up such a child in tune with the social norms of our society and culture.

This book is based on real life odyssey of a child born with Down syndrome and her family who worked together to bring about a not so small miracle. The narrative takes hold of us from the time Radhika was born with a mental defect and was late in attaining all her milestones, to her growth, into a confident young lady who possesses all the social graces, understands money, can shop, cook, swim, play tennis, squash, swim well enough to win prizes in special competitions, and paint well enough to get high praise from artistes like Anjol, Ela Menon and critics like Krishna Chiatanya. Some of her paintings are the pride possessions that beautify the celebrity homes.

The book is an account of the frustra-

tions and joys experienced by the Chand family in bringing up Radhika. Mrs. Chand rightly emphasises the "can do" philosophy so that every mentally challenged child might be helped to attain his/her potential. It is an epistla which documents the triumph of love, patience and determination of her family for helping Radhika find her place in the sun, on her own merit and not for pity or charity. Equally important role was played in rebuilding Radhika by institutions of special education and trained professionals who helped to bring out the best in her. Regretably, there are few institutions with facilities for this important task in our country.

Mrs. Chand frankly discusses her experiences, successes as well as concerns faced by a family of a mentally retarded child as well as their responses to important events. There in lies the main value of the book. The empathy, desire to find a solution to problems observed, determination to implement a solution once found and all this carried out with love as if God Himself desired the family to play this role are the important ingredients which makes "Mountains to climb" an inspiring book.

I strongly recommend this book for pediatricians, parents of mentally disabled children, teachers and social workers working in the fields of mental retardation. It is a beautifully written practical guide to the home management of a mentally retarded child.

**B.N.S. Walia,**  
2004, Sector 11-C,  
Chandigarh 160 11.