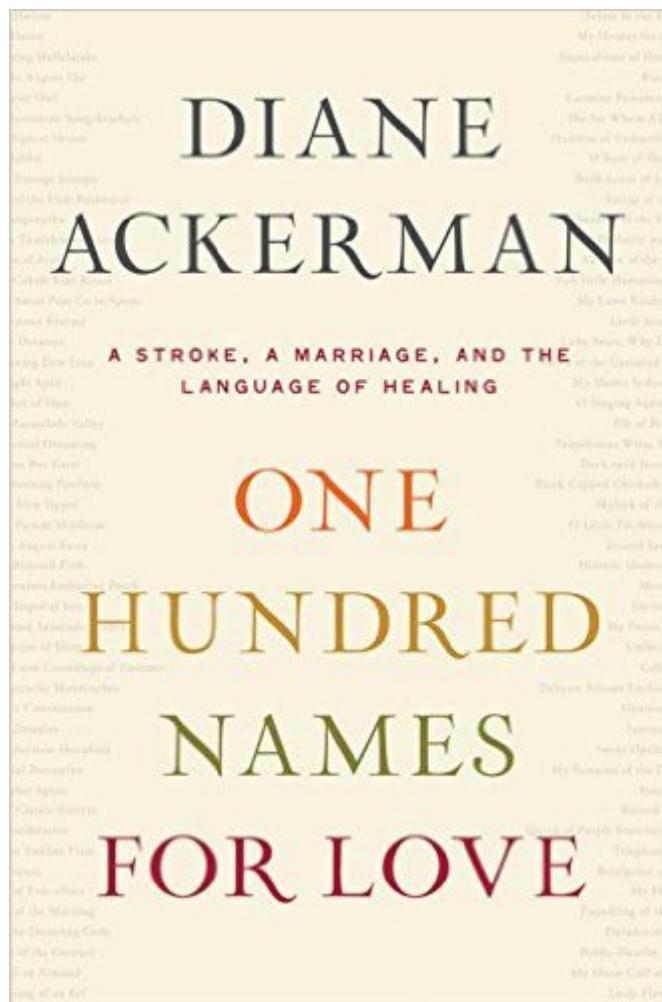


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One Hundred Names For Love: A Stroke, A Marriage, And The Language Of Healing



Synopsis

Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize Finalist for the National Book Circle Critics Award "Diane Ackerman's most enjoyable, intimate, and heartrending work yet." •Atul Gawande Everyone who cherishes the gift of language will cherish Diane Ackerman's narrative masterpiece, an exquisitely written love story and medical miracle story, one that combines science, inspiration, wisdom, and heart. One day Ackerman's husband, Paul West, an exceptionally gifted wordsmith and intellectual, suffered a terrible stroke. When he regained awareness he was afflicted with aphasia •loss of language• and could utter only a single syllable: "mem." The standard therapies yielded little result but frustration. Diane soon found, however, that by harnessing their deep knowledge of each other and her scientific understanding of language and the brain she could guide Paul back to the world of words. This triumphant book is both a humane and revealing addition to the medical literature on stroke and aphasia and an exquisitely written love story: a magnificent addition to literature, period.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One Hundred Names for Love is Diane Ackerman's brilliant and inspirational memoir of how she and her husband, the writer Paul West, coped with the stroke that left him - at age 75 - unable to walk, speak, or care for himself in any of the most basic ways. Devastating though it was, the crisis actually couldn't have happened to a better couple - two creative individuals for whom language is nearly as essential as breathing. In addition to the standard treatment protocols, through much experimentation and faith in the brain's plasticity, Ackerman and West developed their own

rehabilitation regimen as innovative and playful as it was exhausting. Four years into West's recovery, Ackerman invites a doctor unfamiliar with the case to comment on her husband's most recent brain scan. [The doctor] pointed out the damage from the past stroke, in the temporal and parietal lobes, a large dead patch in the frontal lobe, and missing bits elsewhere. "I'd assume this man has been in a vegetative state," he said with a soft humanity. On the contrary, Ackerman assures him. By "working the brain hard every day for four and a half years," her husband has not only regained his speech and mobility, but also has written several new books and published a variety of essays. The doctor shakes his head. "I'm so glad you told me this about him," he said thoughtfully. "It's important to know what's possible." Certainly possible for two immensely creative and determined human beings who have had the knowledge, will, means, and mutual devotion to take the healing process to its fullest potential. Creative medicine indeed. For which Ackerman and West deserve nothing but the highest regard.

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