

# Literary Speaking

## My Year with Eleanor

By Noelle Hancock

Reviewed by Mary Ellen Cross  
Yankton Community Library

As an individual who regularly reads and enjoys nonfiction works, I was drawn to and intrigued by *My Year with Eleanor*.

The author, Noelle Hancock, is a young woman who, as a very successful blogger for an entertainment web site, found herself suddenly unemployed when her employer closed that portion of the business. Filled with anxiety, she is forced to confront her dilemma and find a way to put some order back into her life.

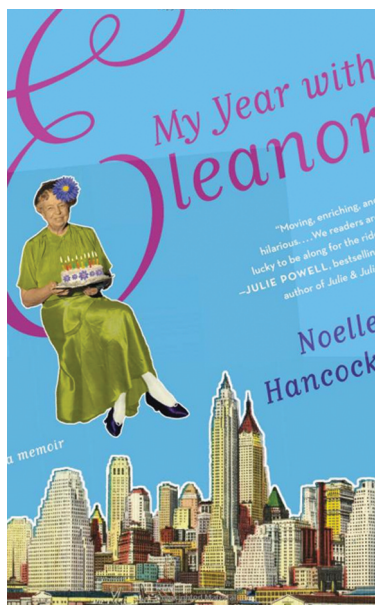
During her daily search for another job, she is quite accidentally led to a small chalkboard in a coffee shop with the quote for the day. It read "Do one thing every day that scares you." Eleanor Roosevelt.

Early on, Hancock realized she wasn't really doing anything. As a blogger her twenty-something life had been filled with activity. However, now she had given up many things including bowling because "she wasn't good at it." Hancock's interest in the Eleanor quote led her to discuss it with her friends and her doctor. They suggested that her avoidance of activities was really a form of fear.

Hancock began reading many of Eleanor's writings and those written about her by others. She began to realize that if she indeed was to face her fear, she needed to do things that would overcome that complicating facet of her character.

Each chapter of *My Year with Eleanor* begins with some of Roosevelt's words. Noelle finds that she is inspired by the common sense challenges cited by Eleanor and the fact that Mrs. Roosevelt faced many challenges in her own life. This lead Hancock to decide to devote at least one year to doing things that "scared" her and that she probably would not have ever done under other circumstances.

Can you imagine yourself doing stand-up



comedy in a night club or flying a fighter plane? As I read this book I developed an admiration for the author's efforts and courage and was entertained by her choices. Some things involved much practice and forethought as she undertook a variety of activities. The reader will share the anxiety, thrills, humor, romance and breathtaking achievements of this young woman as she set out to rebuild her life and face her fears.

No doubt each of us has moments when we wish we could change something in the life we lead. The author's efforts to provide a new focus in her own life may inspire others to adapt what they read to something appropriate for their own

lives. I would highly recommend *My Year with Eleanor*. The events and persons cited in this book are real, not fiction. There are lessons that can be gleaned from Hancock's book.

***This book is available in the adult nonfiction section of the Yankton Community Library.***

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