

From One Optimist to Another

I have always admired the work of Michael J. Fox. Although I usually had to find another tv in the house to watch his fabulous role as Uber-conservative Alex P. Keaton on *Family Ties*, the family did enjoy the *Back to the Future* trilogy and the original *Teen Wolf*. Another of my favorite Fox movies is *The Secret of My Success* in which he plays a young man climbing the corporate ladder without really trying. I admit that I was not an avid fan of his second major series *Spin City*, during the course of which he made public his Parkinson's Disease diagnosis.

The past decade of Michael's life is chronicled in the excellent autobiography, *Always Looking Up: The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist*. The book is broken down into four extremely informative, touching, and HILARIOUS sections each showing how he has embraced his new life. His decision to retire (maybe not permanently) from acting, politics (ok so maybe not the best reading ever, but), faith, and family have all played a part in the creation of the Michael J. Fox Foundation which not only funds PD research but for other debilitating diseases as well.

While reading about his political views did get kind of dry, it did hold my interest with some of the humorous anecdotes that were a highlight of the entire book. I loved the dedication he pays to his wife, Tracy (who played his girlfriend Ellen on *Ties*), son Sam, twin daughters Aquinnah and Schuyler, and 8-year old Esme (who was born following Mike's diagnosis... COOL!) Cross-country road trips, playing guitar with The Who (it really WAS him playing Johnny B. Goode in *Back to the Future*), and his battle with Rush Limbaugh (the BEST part of the Politics section) are just a few of the remarkable tales he spins.

Through it all, one thing was quite evident: Mr. Fox's

unwavering optimism. Never for one instant did I find that he was painting a picture asking for the reader's sympathy. It just proves the cliché that when one is given lemons he should make lemonade and who doesn't like a tall cool glass of lemonade.