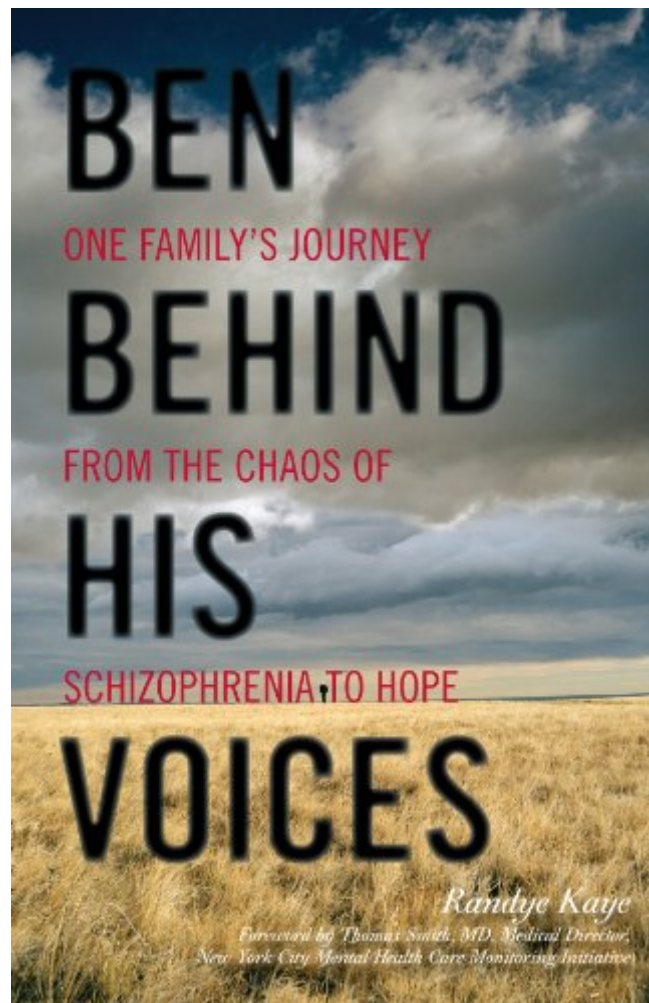




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Ben Behind His Voices: One Family's Journey From The Chaos Of Schizophrenia To Hope



Synopsis

When readers first meet Ben, he is a sweet, intelligent, seemingly well-adjusted youngster. Fast forward to his teenage years, though, and Ben's life has spun out of control. Ben is swept along by an illness over which he has no control—one that results in runaway episodes, periods of homelessness, seven psychotic breaks, seven hospitalizations, and finally a diagnosis and treatment plan that begins to work. Schizophrenia strikes an estimated one in a hundred people worldwide by some estimates, and yet understanding of the illness is lacking. Through Ben's experiences, and those of his mother and sister, who supported Ben through every stage of his illness and treatment, readers gain a better understanding of schizophrenia, as well as mental illness in general, and the way it affects individuals and families. Here, Kaye encourages families to stay together and find strength while accepting the reality of a loved one's illness; she illustrates, through her experiences as Ben's mother, the delicate balance between letting go and staying involved. She honors the courage of anyone who suffers with mental illness and is trying to improve his life and participate in his own recovery. *Ben Behind His Voices* also reminds professionals in the psychiatric field that every patient who comes through their doors has a life, one that he has lost through no fault of his own. It shows what goes right when professionals treat the family as part of the recovery process and help them find support, education, and acceptance. And it reminds readers that those who suffer from mental illness, and their families, deserve respect, concern, and dignity.

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Customer Reviews

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for publishing Ben Behind His Voices. My 29 year old son was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective disorder 6 months ago after 6 hospitalizations over the course of 2 1/2 years. Having witnessed a downward slope in his mental illness over the last 6 years, 2 years in particular, I needed this book, your words, to help me walk with someone while I come to grips and accept his illness, not as a result of anything I have done. Letting go has been a process and its not to say that I don't have moments of grief but at least I am encouraged that we are not alone.

After reading Ben Behind His Voices, I felt like I had just read the Dr. Spock book about caring for your baby. The book gave me guidance, where there was none. I felt empowered with strength to help my child for her future into adulthood with a little less guilt on my part. Getting firsthand knowledge on how to maneuver through the system was priceless. Randye Kaye shares her deepest emotions during the good and the bad times, the patterns that come with mental illness. Her feelings helped me to deal with my own emotions during such stressful times. This book should be read by any parent dealing with a child or an adult child with mental health struggles. I recommend you read this book before you read books on specific illnesses. A life saver for me and my child.

Being a parent of a 23 year old son with schizophrenia, a social worker, and one with a family history of schizophrenia I never the less struggled with my son's behavior for three years until his diagnosis by the hospital staff during his first hospitalization. I therefore really appreciate the author's detailed description of her son's prodromal behaviors and symptoms. Doctors, therapists, and the general public need much more education in this area! Several therapists (myself included) did not even consider this possibility. Once diagnosed I was able to adjust my expectations of him and no longer engaged in futile arguments to get him to be more reasonable. I also greatly

appreciated the author's detailed descriptions of her parenting as it helped greatly to relieve niggling fears and guilt that if only I had been stricter or provided more structure my son could have avoided such a severe illness... It was clear from reading Ben's story that causation at this point in time is still very much a guessing game. Kudos to the author for her contribution to this field. So much more needs to be known! .

I am truly impressed with Ms. Kaye - as a mother, an author, and an advocate for Ben. She faced the specter of mental illness in her son and found a path to success. My own journey through the mental illness with my husband led to his death. I was unsuccessful in getting him the help he needed although I tried my best. I know there are others like me who found getting their loved one the help they need to survive to be an insurmountable obstacle. I was relieved to read of one family who found a way to help the sufferer. Thank you, Ms. Kaye for infusing some hope into a seemingly hopeless scenario. Schizophrenia is a daunting diagnosis. But those who have it deserve to be helped, understood, kept safe, and most of all, they deserve a chance at life. Ms. Kaye does a superlative job of demystifying the navigation of the mental health system for anyone. She offers a plethora of ideas, tools, and resources that can be used to help a mentally ill person. Knowledge is power, and Ms. Kaye does her best to give readers as much as she can.

This book kept me detached from developing a relationship with Ben and his Mom. I think it was because the Mom, the author, remains in a limited detachment relationship with a guarded heart so the emotional tone of this family's journey is not felt by the reader. However, an objective view is presented with a few research articles and numerous resources given throughout the book, making it a good beginning read on this subject. I am both a counselor and mother of a bipolar daughter whose addiction finally ended in death and a grandmother of an autistic child with mental illness, so I know she was not able to tell us subjectively the pain and disillusionment, almost total devastation mental illness causes in the family and within the diseased loved one. That journey is one I wish had never become a shared pathway of my family. Kudos to her for making Destigmatizing the mentality ill her mission. Until that is done, there will never be an adequate fund to improve our greatly inadequate national mental health care system.

Thank you Ben, Ali and Randye for giving me a clearer sight, hope and new strength through your honest and wonderful book. I got to cry many hidden tears, as I felt a strong connection to your family's story. My son is 20 years and in hospital for his second time right now. Last time I didn't

understand what was happening and I had struggled for three years to find out. He got the same diagnosis as Ben after a while. When I visited him two days ago he sat with his head down in a chair and said "mom I have gotten into such a mess, and I'm just trying to finish this puzzle in my head, so I'm not a good party right now. I need to be alone and think it out". Earlier I have felt so alone, so sad, but this time it was different because I had your book and your experiences so close in mind. I managed to think further, let him be with a smile and walked out with a peace of mind. I said "That's ok, I will see you soon then. I also have a daughter, just like Ali. She works really hard and loves her brother. I saw her even clearer through Ali. I feel that I am walking your path ten years later, and I am very lucky to have your footsteps to follow. Thank you so much!

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