

# THE BEST KIND OF MAGIC

*Notes on Mothering and Autism*

# ONE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

1. The Past is Powerful
2. Peace is a Practice
3. Presence is Priceless
4. The Magic is in the Moment

# PART 1: THE PAST IS POWERFUL

"kept neatly in a refrigerator which didn't defrost..."

"In the whole group, there are very few really  
warmhearted fathers and mothers."

–Leo Kanner

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"What emerges is an account of the heart, the sweat, the stubbornness, and the fight displayed by an always-evolving cast of players, whose commitment to changing the world, over three to four generations, turned autism from a condition that was barely recognized into the most talked-about, most controversial, diagnosis of our time.

Thousands were involved in bringing about that outcome: doctors and social workers, educators and lawyers, researchers and writers. More recently, individuals with autism have often taken a more active role, speaking for themselves. The most constant presence, however, is that of parents: mothers and fathers standing up for their children, driven sometimes by desperation, sometimes by anger, and always by love."

from the Preface

"Magnificent . . . Chock-full of suspense . . . This book does what no other on autism has done." —*Washington Post*

## IN A DIFFERENT KEY



*The Story of Autism*

JOHN DONVAN  
CAREN ZUCKER

2016 News & Documentary Emmy Award Winners

# Notes

How might history shape us in ways we don't always see?

How might legacies of blame and shame persist in new forms?

How can we keep ourselves aware of how our own personal or institutional histories might affect our interactions?

How can interdisciplinary approaches bring hope?

The Past is Powerful.

# PART 2: PEACE IS A PRACTICE

"There is no such thing as love without the anticipation of loss, and that specter of despair can be the engine of intimacy."

—Andrew Solomon, TEDTalk

**MODERN LOVE**

# A Glimpse Into My Son's Magnificent Mind

Our house is a mess of misplaced possessions. I'm grateful for what this — and my son's autism — has taught me.



Brian Rea

By Paige Martin Reynolds

**READING FROM  
"A GLIMPSE INTO MY  
SON'S MAGNIFICENT  
MIND"**

# Notes

Make the invisible visible.

Lean into love.

Stay away from shame.

Find the gift in every experience.

Peace is a practice.

# PART 3: PRESENCE IS PRICELESS

"I would look at him and feel a love so sharp it seemed my flesh lay open. I made a list of all the things I would do for him. Scald off my skin. Tear out my eyes. Walk my feet to bones, if only he would be happy and well."

—Madeline Miller, *Circe*

"I would melt my heart to save yours."

—Max Reynolds, 7.21.20



**READING FROM  
"PARENTING AND POWER"**

# Notes

Families may have trauma from the past.

Families will have concerns for the future.

Families need to feel heard.

Families need to feel supported.

Presence is Priceless.

# PART 4: THE MAGIC IS IN THE MOMENT

"The spotlight shifts from the traditional markers of success to those that are ordinarily ignored by mainstream society. Our interest is in how loud they laugh, how deeply they feel, how fearlessly they love, and how unabashedly they weep."

– Dr. Shefali Tsabary

“I hope you have dreams about flowers and giraffes.”

– Max Reynolds, 2.11.18



**READING FROM  
"BAGGAGE CHECK"**

# Notes

Let go of expectations.

Be aware of projection.

Focus on potential rather than problems.

Move from ordinary to extraordinary.

The Magic is in the Moment.

# **QUESTIONS & COMMENTS**