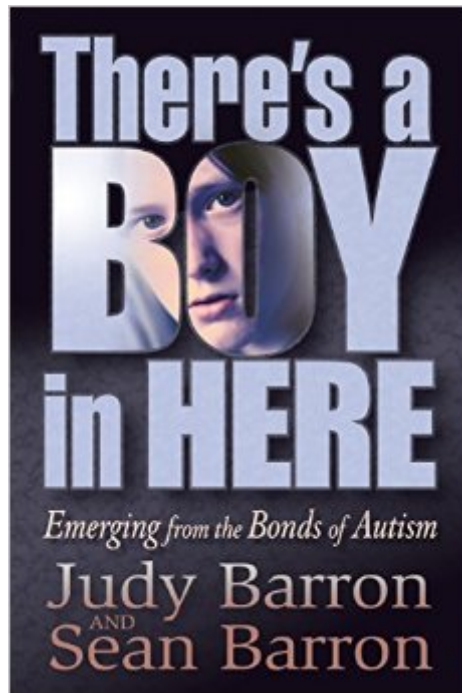


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There's A Boy In Here: Emerging From The Bonds Of Autism



Synopsis

This is a view from inside the mind of autism--a dual autobiography written in point-counterpoint style by Judy Barron and her son, Sean Barron. Together, they chronicle Sean's young life and the effects of autism on him and his family. As a youngster, Sean was confrontational, uncontrollable, isolated and desperately unhappy. Baffled about how to interact with others, he felt like an alien from outer space. Then, at seventeen, Sean experienced a breakthrough that began his release from autism. Today he's a public speaker, college student, and reporter--and close to his family. You absolutely must read this book.

Book Information

Paperback: 268 pages

Publisher: Future Horizons; 1 edition (January 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1885477864

ISBN-13: 978-1885477866

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (60 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #410,856 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #386 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Children's Health > Autism & Asperger's Syndrome](#) #426 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Special Needs](#) #1072 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Special Needs](#)

Customer Reviews

When my wife and I found out that our son, Jason, was autistic, it was devastating. My wife was in denial for about a month and I felt like my whole world collapsed. I went looking for books on autism and stumbled on this one first. Sean Barron was probably more severely autistic than my son; Jason was actually diagnosed as Pervasive Development Disorder: Not Otherwise Specified, which is a catchall for disorders that are akin to autism but less severe in nature. The book gave us an insight into what it means to be autistic: the inability to interpret sensory data in the normal manner. This in turn leads to everything else: the loss of language (or failure to pick it up), the great difficulties in socializing, etc. The fact that the book provides (in italicized segments) Sean's own insights makes it invaluable. Much of what his mother writes provides insights into how wearing it can be on a family, but so much has changed since Sean was a child that I could not say that it provides much useful

advice in the therapies to seek for a child with autism. The good news is that many children CAN improve significantly. Jason is now 8-1/2, he is mainstreamed in school, he does well, and he has some friends. My wife and I have reached our dream: hearing him talk so much that we wish he would take a break. The bad news is that not every child will succeed like that, and the road is still a very difficult one, leaving parents short on cash, time and attention to spare on their other children. This book still remains a great place to start.

As an individual with an autism diagnosis, I found this book to be fascinating. I went through many of the same challenges. Both Sean and I had social problems growing up. Sean was diagnosed by medical professionals in the 1960's as being of "dull-normal" intelligence; I was diagnosed in 1987 at age 2 with mental retardation because I was nonverbal and ignored the tester. Both of our mothers stopped trusting what they were told. While our childhoods did also have some major differences, Sean gave a perspective that was easy for me to empathize with. I too had a rough time socially. I can remember being very young and thinking my mom could read my mind. My parents sent me to private school in order to prevent me from being placed in a special ed class for mentally retarded children. I still had major social problems similar to Sean's, though adolescence was much less socially stressful for me than early-mid childhood because I had more choice of who I could hang out with, more ability to develop my social skills, and less fear of bullying. Being a girl may have had something to do with that as well. I still have strengths and weaknesses; I think GRE tests and my college classes are easy, but job interviews terrify me. I liked the "outside in" perspective given by Judy Barron because it helped me see the other side of the story. I identified with a lot of the "inside-out" perspective Sean gave; Judy's "outside-in" perspective helped me understand what my family went through. An excellent read.

This book is the first I've seen and read that was written or partially written by the person WITH autism. The mother recounts her son's life and then Sean himself interjects with what he remembers of that time in his life. I didn't know that those with Autism remembered how they acted and why they did it. It's a real eye opener to the autism world. What many autistic kids do is not longer just "weird" and "pointless" behaviour. Sean explains why he did such repetitive things. For anyone even remotely interested in autism and definitely for anyone who has an autistic in the family, this a must read. I was captivated and couldn't put the book down. What also makes this an interesting read is Sean was born in the 60's. Back then, there was very little known about Autism and what people thought they knew was later proved wrong. Raising an autistic kid in the 60's and 70's was a

lot harder than it is today.

While many books on autism tell either from a family or individual's viewpoint, this story is unique in that it presents the perspective from both sides. Paired with the mother's account is one of her son with autism. This was written during a time when autism was still between psychoanalysis & neurology so some of the interventions seem misguided (although acceptable at the time). When Sean reaches high school & begins to recognize himself as an autistic individual, it is an unusual awakening. Good family-account/personal-account reading.

Having a son on the spectrum myself, I found this book to offer such a genuine perspective into the mindset of both the parent and the child. In particular, having the added insights and explanations of Sean Barron, himself, in reference to the often bizarre and seemingly unexplainable behaviors that are associated with autism, gave me a unique new set of eyes to see my son through. What a gift this is in terms of the insight it provides and the hope it inspires.

I teach children with a variety of behavioral handicaps, and this book explains the behaviors of children with autism from the point of view of the parents and the child himself as well as any I have ever read.

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