

Exiting Nirvana: A Daughter's Life with Autism —and How She Found Her Way Out



For years, I lived in a world of my own, a world where I was safe and content. I didn't need to speak, or interact with others, or even move. I could just sit and be, and that was enough.



Exiting Nirvana: A Daughter's Life with Autism

by Clara Claiborne Park

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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But then, one day, something changed. I don't know what it was, but I suddenly felt a longing for something more. I wanted to connect with the world around me, to experience all that it had to offer.

It was a difficult and frightening journey, but I was determined to find my way out of my own little world. And with the help of my family and friends, I finally did.

The Early Years

I was born in 1995, the youngest of three children. My parents knew from the beginning that I was different. I didn't make eye contact, I didn't respond to my name, and I didn't speak.

At first, my parents thought I was deaf. But after several tests, the doctors told them that I had autism.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means that it affects people in different ways. Some people with autism are nonverbal, while others can speak fluently. Some people with autism have difficulty with social interactions, while others can be quite social.

I am on the more severe end of the spectrum. I am nonverbal, and I have difficulty with social interactions. I also have sensory processing disorder, which means that I am very sensitive to certain sights, sounds, and smells.

Growing up with autism was not easy. I was often bullied by other children, and I had difficulty making friends. I also struggled with school, and I had to repeat kindergarten twice.

But despite all of the challenges, I had a happy childhood. I loved spending time with my family, and I enjoyed playing with my toys. I also had a few close friends who understood me and accepted me for who I was.

The Turning Point

When I was 12 years old, something happened that changed my life forever. I was in a special education class, and we were learning about the Holocaust. I was fascinated by the stories of the survivors, and I was particularly moved by the story of a young girl named Anne Frank.

Anne Frank was a Jewish girl who lived in hiding during the Holocaust. She wrote a diary about her experiences, and her diary has become one of the most famous books in the world.

I read Anne Frank's diary over and over again. I was inspired by her courage and her determination. I realized that if she could survive the

Holocaust, then I could overcome my own challenges.

I started to push myself harder. I started to try to speak more, and I started to interact with others more. I also started to work harder in school.

It was slow and difficult progress, but I was making progress. And with the help of my family and friends, I was finally able to find my way out of my own little world.

My Life Today

I am now 25 years old, and I am living a full and happy life. I am a college graduate, and I work as a writer and speaker. I also have a boyfriend, and we are planning to get married next year.

I still have my challenges. I still struggle with social interactions, and I still have sensory processing disorder. But I have learned to manage my challenges, and I am able to live a happy and productive life.

I am so grateful for the people who have helped me on my journey. I am grateful for my family and friends, who have always been there for me. I am grateful for my teachers, who have helped me to learn and grow. And I am grateful for Anne Frank, whose story inspired me to never give up.

I know that my journey is not over. I still have a lot to learn and grow. But I am confident that I will continue to make progress. And I am excited for the future.

Advice for Parents of Children with Autism

If you are the parent of a child with autism, I know that you are probably feeling scared and overwhelmed. But I want to assure you that there is hope.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to raising a child with autism. But there are some things that all parents can do to help their children succeed.

- **Early intervention is key.** The earlier your child receives intervention, the better their chances of success.
- **Find a good team of professionals to help you.** This team should include a pediatrician, a developmental pediatrician, a speech therapist, and an occupational therapist.
- **Be patient and supportive.** Your child will need your love and support every step of the way.
- **Don't give up.** There will be challenges along the way, but never give up on your child. With the right help and support, your child can reach their full potential.

I am living proof that it is possible to overcome the challenges of autism. With the right help and support, your child can reach their full potential too.



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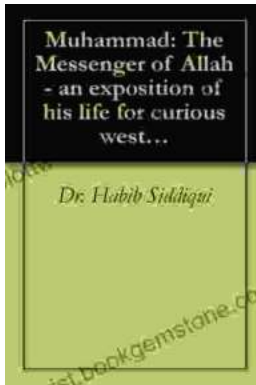
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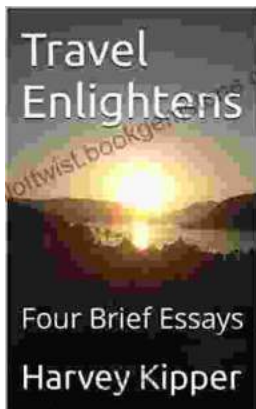
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