



## A Slant of Sun: One Child's Courage

*Beth Kephart*

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## **A Slant of Sun: One Child's Courage** Beth Kephart

Named a Best Book of the Year by *Salon* magazine and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *A Slant of Sun* was praised for its incandescent prose about the experience of loving a child who brings tremendous frustration and incalculable rewards and for its extraordinary resonance. Like *Operating Instructions* and *The Liars' Club*, *A Slant of Sun* is a contemporary classic.

Nearly one in five children grow up facing a developmental or behavioral challenge, and like them, Beth Kephart's son, Jeremy, showed early signs of being different: language eluded him, he preferred playing alone to an afternoon on the jungle gym. Doctors diagnosed Jeremy with a mild form of autism called Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. *A Slant of Sun* is a passionate memoir about how Kephart, guided by the twin tools of intuition and imagination, helped lead her son toward wholeness. Pulsing with the questions, "Is normal possible? Definable?" *A Slant of Sun* speaks to everyone not just parents of the redemptive power of love.

## **A Slant of Sun: One Child's Courage Details**

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Author : Beth Kephart

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## **From Reader Review A Slant of Sun: One Child's Courage for online ebook**

### **Anna says**

A gorgeous, deeply moving book written in Beth Kephart's signature style. There is not a throw-away sentence in any of Beth's work. Her writing is like a truffle - intense and to be savored slowly for the rich, multi-layered experience.

Beth's honest, searing account of her son's journey through a developmental disorder diagnosed at an early age - and her accompanying journey as his mother - is a triumph.

Whether you have faced similar challenges or not, this book will live in your heart.

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### **Laura says**

A memoir written about her son and his diagnosis of Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.

This is a lovely book that is written in elegant prose and highlights Beth Kephart's son, Jeremy. What I really liked about this book were all the poetic elements that struck a cord in your heart and perfectly illustrated what Beth Kephart was going through. I enjoyed this book, I would recommend it to anyone who wanted a different perspective on children and their remarkable courage.

\*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2008...>

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### **Don Moore says**

This book is on my favorites shelf and I am reading it for the 3rd time, having first read it eight years ago. As a guy, I found this story profoundly moving as, through it, I found myself revisiting my own boyhood with its pain, passions and challenges. It is a beautifully written story that tells of the courageous efforts of both a mother and her son, working together, to face and overcome the challenges that this little boy faced. What came through to me, so beautifully and honestly described, was the discovery, healing and growth that they BOTH experienced in the process.

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### **Nitya says**

This is a beautifully written chronicle of a mother's realization that something is not right with her child, and her struggle to define what the problem is, and how to best help her son. Beth Kephart is a writer, who stays home with her first child, and who gradually begins to notice that Jeremy is not like other children. He seldom speaks, and when he does it is never in sentences. He is not interested in other kids, or in most toys. Except for cars, he is obsessed with toy cars, and spends hours building elaborate patterns of various cars. Sounds harmless, right? But he also is terrified of having people come over to the house, and he is

increasingly absorbed in his own world as he withdraws from the world around him.

His mother describes coming out of her denial that there's a problem, and then the frustration of finding the right path, the right therapy, the right school. The official diagnosis, at age 2 1/2, is Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

How the author, and her husband, and Jeremy, work tirelessly and bravely to ensure Jeremy a place in the world where he will not be isolated and alone. that is the story here. These parents are so present and involved and engaged with their son that he does, eventually, pull through, and get assimilated into regular school.

One day, around age seven, after Jeremy, alone in his room, practices having a conversation with a friend from school, he yells down to his mother, "See Mom, I AM like other kids." That part made me want to cry. For each milestone he makes, I could feel his mother's joy and I, too, celebrated. Love and caring attention doesn't always heal everything, but it goes a long way.

This is a great book for anyone with a kid in their life who is having problems, especially anywhere on the autism spectrum.

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### **Stacia Mcconnell says**

I agree: not a tragedy, but definitely a high hurdle that most parents don't face. Unfortunately, it struck me as one of those stories that makes it seem that parents can "fix" their child with certain modifications. Many children with this diagnoses do not have the high level of communication necessary to be able to straddle such hurdles. Most likely, their family's life is then modified to meet the needs of the child. I wonder how they would have coped if they had a "normal" child first who would have required their attention, as well.

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### **Victoria Lees says**

A Slant of Sun by Beth Kephart is about a journey of an extraordinary mother and son relationship, a relationship of wonder, a relationship of need. Kephart collects memories in her heart and paints them in vivid imagery and beautiful poetry for the reader. Through one of her conversations with her son, Kephart reminds all people to believe in themselves. Jeremy is one lucky young man, and we, as readers, are privileged to learn right along with him. For all parents who have special needs children, this memoir offers hope.

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### **Rose Anderson says**

A heart-wrenching story of a mother as she discovers that her beloved child is not quote normal, possibly autistic. Very heart-warming as her son progresses.

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### **Lori Gertz says**

Kephart's prose is so beautifully written I couldn't wait to pick it up every night. A touching story of a mother whose first child is diagnosed with PDD as a toddler. This book is her journey through discovery of who her son is both despite his challenges and in celebration of his differentness.

There is an extraordinary scene towards the end of a book where a woman with tragic facial disfiguration enters the restaurant that she and her son are sitting in. She knows this woman's disability will cause her son to scream and cry so she explains to him what he must do and distracts him from the woman's view. Prose from this page reads, "It is frankly unforgivable that I, who know the brutality of differentness and the loneliness of separateness, could not, did not extend beyond myself."

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### **Eva says**

Since I have a cousin who was diagnosed as being in the "autistic spectrum", this book hit really close to home. I found it to be inspiringly hopeful and uplifting as well as beautifully written.

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### **Jen says**

One added note: The summary of goodreads refers to her son's diagnosis/disability as a tragedy. That's horribly inaccurate and at no point does the author imply that sentiment at all!

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A well-written book that has the crafted sentences of fiction about a non-fiction tale. Any parent who has felt less-than in relation to their spouse, their child, other parents, experts, doctors can relate to the authors honest words.

It should not inspire you to do exactly what these parents did - this is not a prescription book - it should inspire you to get to know your child, to be brave enough to try new solutions, and to learn self-forgiveness.

Plus, I read it in a day. A nice way to spend the time waiting to pick up kids, after dinner, before bed. :)

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### **Jennifer says**

If you have a child that has a disability, but you see it as an opportunity for him/her to blossom--then this emotionnal tale will lift your heart.

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### **Ann says**

Kephart read at Saint Joe's more than a decade ago from this book, and it is a lovely book about autism, dealing with difference and all kinds of things. One of the best things she said was that it is the narrative I in creative nonfiction that needs to take responsibility for the bad in the book, that the characters/people in the book should be portrayed in the best light as possible (I am paraphrasing here). It's something that has stayed with me.

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## Jill says

There are things about this book that are both powerful and difficult to read. I wonder if this is because Kephart has worked so hard to be honest, maybe with herself first.

Here is a quotation:

"Imagining motherhood is like imagining yourself old: There are no accurate forecasts. I guess I assumed I would know more. Pregnant, I assumed that mother's intuition was a hard, certain thing, a perpetually replenishing reservoir of basic instinct. If there were problems, the gut would howl it. If there were risks, the heart would rattle. If the jumbled trivia of daily existence pulled into and onto itself like a knot, the mother's hands would separate the strands. But it has not been that way for me. If there is a road map here, some compass inscribed on my soul, I have not found it." (52)

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## Shannon says

Beautifully written. Kephart is a writer by profession, now writing about her son. She could be writing about car wax and her words would enchant. But, spilling out her heart about her child... it's breathtaking. Like all the anecdotal books, I appreciate seeing the parade of emotions and experiences spilled out on the page.

Amazon Book Description:

At a time when as many as one in five children face the challenge of growing up with a behavioral disorder, more and more parents are finding themselves at a loss to know how best to raise their children.

For Beth Kephart's son, the diagnosis was "pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified"—a broad spectrum of difficulties, including autistic features. As the author and her husband discover, all that label really means is that their son Jeremy is "different in a million wonderful ways, and also different in ways that need our help."

In intimate, incandescent prose, Kephart shares the painful and inspiring experience of loving a child whose "special needs" bring tremendous frustration and incalculable rewards. "What, in the end, are you fighting for: Normal?" Kephart asks. "Is normal possible? Can it be defined? . . . And is normal superior to what the child inherently is, to what he aspires to, fights to become, every second of his day?"

With the help of passionate parental involvement and the kindness of a few open hearts, Jeremy slowly emerges from a world of obsessive play rituals, atypical language constructions, endless pacing, and lonely frustrations. Triumphant, he begins to engage others, describe his thoughts and passions, build essential friendships. Ultimately this is a story of the shallowness of medical labels compared to a child's courage and a mother's love, of which Kephart writes, "Nothing erodes it. It is not sand on a beach. It is the nuclear heart of things—hard as the rock of this earth."

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## Callie says

A really touching story of a mother's love, courage, and persistence. A great read for getting a parent's perspective on raising a child with special needs, in this case Pervasive Developmental Delays Not Otherwise Specified--an Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is a bit dated, so it might not have the most up-to-date therapies but I think that there is something universal in the process she and her husband went through as

they started thinking "Is this normal?" and "What is best for my child?" I suspect that many diagnosis experiences are also still very similar... unnerving, unsatisfying, and requiring a lot of grieving. Kephart knows her son well and appreciates all aspects of him while also seeing the big picture and identifying the ways in which he absolutely must change and grow to function in the world. You see how necessary this kind of parenting and simultaneously...how difficult.

3 starts because I did not love her writing style at all times, but I was reading for a class and looking for particular bits of information so the more fanciful sections felt like filler to me and I wonder if they would seem be more welcomed by other readers.

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