



# Making Peace with Autism: One Family's Story of Struggle, Discovery, and Unexpected Gifts

By Susan Senator

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Receiving a diagnosis of autism is a major crisis for parents and families, who often feel as if their world has come to an end. In this insightful narrative, a courageous and inspiring mother explains why a diagnosis of autism doesn't have to shatter a family's dreams of happiness. Senator offers the hard-won, in-the-trenches wisdom of someone who's been there and is still there today—and she demonstrates how families can find courage, contentment, and connection in the shadow of autism.

In *Making Peace with Autism*, Susan Senator describes her own journey raising a child with a severe autism spectrum disorder, along with two other typically developing boys. Without offering a miracle treatment or cure, Senator offers valuable strategies for coping successfully with the daily struggles of life with an autistic child.

Along the way she models the combination of stamina and courage, openness, and humor that has helped her family to survive—and even to thrive. Topics include: the agony of diagnosis, grieving and acceptance, finding the right school program, helping siblings with their struggles and concerns, having fun together, and keeping the marriage strong.

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## **Making Peace with Autism: One Family's Story of Struggle, Discovery, and Unexpected Gifts** By Susan Senator **Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"This book is as much about the very nature of parenting as it is about autism. The issues Senator raises are issues faced, in some measure, by every family, and she captures the hard work as well as the importance of enjoying life along the way. *Making Peace* is a book that every parent should read, for it provides tremendous insight into the mind of an autistic person, and is likely to engender compassion and understanding towards individuals with autism spectrum disorder."—*Pennsylvania Gazette*

"An honest, emotion-filled account of what it is like raising an autistic child, its effects on the family, marriage, and one's own test of strength."—*Brookline Tab*

"I hope the book succeeds in finding its way onto the bedside tables of many mothers and fathers, teachers and administrators, politicians and doctors. Regardless of whether they have anything to do with autism, they'll learn a lot about life from Senator, Nat, and their family. What this book shows us about acceptance and love would make the world a far better place."—Timothy Shriver, CEO, Special Olympics

"Families will gain much insight into how one family successfully coped with the challenges of raising an autistic child. Mothers, fathers, and siblings should read this honest account of family life with autism."—Temple Grandin, Ph.D., author of *Thinking in Pictures* and *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*

"This is a book that every parent and professional working with autistic children should own, read, and reread. These children have such enormous potential in their own way. It is so refreshing that this family sees it too."—Margaret L. Bauman, M.D., associate professor of neurology, Harvard Medical School

"Senator's story reminds us that while there are currently no medical treatments or cures for autism, we must maintain hope."—Karen London, cofounder, the National Alliance for Autism Research

"Senator's common sense approach and courageous journey give readers a practical and entertaining experience."—Doug and Laurie Flutie, cofounders of the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, Inc.

"This book reaches out to other families in a voice that inspires hope, but without losing realism. The everyday struggles are in the foreground but throughout her positive spirit illuminates a path that will make

the journey easier for other families, and will help them feel they are not alone."—Simon Baron-Cohen, M.D., director, Autism Research Centre, Cambridge University

#### From the Inside Flap

Over the past decade there has been an alarming rise in the rate of autism. While the severity of this disorder varies from child to child, many autistic children have lifelong difficulties connecting with others, using language, and learning. In this engaging and valuable memoir, Susan Senator describes her own journey raising a child with severe autism, along with two other typically developing boys. Unlike other books that focus on the search for miracle cures, Senator shows us how she has been able to love and accept her autistic son as he is--and how she and her family have been able to find courage, contentment, and connection in the shadow of autism.

Throughout this engaging narrative, Senator distills valuable insights and advice from her own experience, focusing on key topics such as: grieving and acceptance, finding the right school program, helping siblings with their struggles and concerns, having fun as a family, and keeping the marriage strong.

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#### About the Author

Susan Senator is the mother of three boys, the oldest of whom has autism. She is the author of *Making Peace with Autism*, a memoir of her family's struggles and triumphs. Her writing on autism has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Boston Globe*. She has been featured on the *Today Show*, CNN, MSNBC, Voice of America, and NPR.

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