



Leaving the Hall Light On: A Mother's Memoir of Living with Her Son's Bipolar Disorder and Surviving His Suicide

Madeline Sharples

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"A moving read of tragedy, trying to prevent it, and coping with life after." Midwest Book Review

"Brave and Gritty. Innovative. Resourceful. Inspiring." Story Circle Book Reviews

"Intense. This story will transform you and change the way you look at the world." Vine Leaves Literary Journal

"Poetically visceral, emotionally honest. An extraordinary memoir." Irvin D. Godofsky, MD

"Moving, intimate and very inspiring." Mark Shelmerdine, CEO, Jeffers Press

"The courage and strength of will it took to write this book is matched by the superb writing, the clarity of emotional insight, and the uplifting music of its brave prose." Jack Gapes, author of *The Naked Eye* and *Method Writing*

"A sad but beautifully written book for anyone who has lost someone they love." Dina Kucera, author of *Everything I Never Wanted to Be*

Leaving the Hall Light On charts the near-destruction of one middle-class family whose son committed suicide after a seven-year struggle with bipolar disorder. Madeline Sharples, author, poet and web journalist, goes deep into her own well of grief to describe her anger, frustration and guilt. She describes many attempts - some successful, some not - to have her son committed to hospital and to keep him on his medication. The book also charts her and her family's redemption, how she considered suicide herself, and ultimately, her decision to live and take care of herself as a woman, wife, mother and writer.

A note from the author: I encourage you to read my book if you have been touched by bipolar disorder or suicide. And even if you have not, my book will inspire you to survive your own tragedies. As author Jessica Bell says: Leaving the Hall Light On is "a remarkable book and it SHOULD be read."

A note from the publisher: I have seen Madeline Sharples read from her memoir and talk about her son's suicide at multiple events. Afterwards, people always come up to Madeline to tell her "My son killed himself too" or "My husband committed suicide," etc. Sometimes the people can't even talk. They are in tears, and they just want to hold Madeline's hand for a minute or ask for a hug. Clearly, there are a lot of people who have experienced the suicide of a loved one. And clearly, they don't have many opportunities to share their grief. That's why they are quick to embrace Madeline when they hear her story. They connect, and they always thank her for sharing her story. I tell you this because I have heard from a small handful of people who believe that Madeline is selfish to focus on her story when the real victim of this tragedy was her son. I find that criticism hypocritical on multiple fronts. Madeline would be the first to agree that the person who suffered most is Paul, her son. There is no question about that. And Madeline honors Paul's memory by volunteering her time to prevent suicide and erase the stigma of mental illness -- and by telling Paul's story in

the first part of the book. But Paul is gone, and the tragedy did not end with his suicide. For survivors, a suicide is only the beginning of suffering. Most people carry that suffering with them for years, rarely talking about it. But Madeline Sharples is willing to talk about what happens after a suicide. For her (and for many others), what happens is a journey deep into one's self in the hope of maintaining sanity and having some semblance of a life after a loved one commits suicide. To call a journey into the self "selfish" misses the point. If you have experienced the suicide of a loved one, you already know this. If you have not experienced such a tragedy, be thankful, and look at Leaving the Hall Light On as an example of what it takes to enable the "self" to survive a tragedy of that magnitude.

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Lizzie Chandler:

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Denice Cooke:

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Kevin Blais:

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Wanda Sousa:

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