



A Balanced Life: Nine Strategies for Coping with the Mental Health Problems of a Loved One

Tom Smith

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The ultimate goal of those with a mental disorder and the people who love them is balance: emotional, mental, spiritual, and behavioral. Yet, living with and responding to a mentally ill person often leads to the chaos of a relationship where the rules change, the dynamics are volatile, and the expectations are unanchored.

In readable, down-to-earth prose, *A Balance Life* teaches family and friends what they can expect from those they love who have mental health problems. It offers nine clear-cut strategies for implementing a plan to support them, including how to: assist a loved one in developing healthy self-esteem accept mental illness as a fact of life identify early warning signs that precede a more difficult phase of the illness create a supportive network of family and friends

Each strategy is illustrated by inspiring stories of real people who have put the principles into practice, and is followed by key questions that ask to ponder their own situations. This is *the* to bringing order to chaos, providing a framework for reactions to the person who has a mental illness. It clarifies expectations and offers advice and encouragement.

Tom Smith is the cofounder of the Karla Smith Foundation, which supports parents and loved ones of mentally ill people. He is author of several articles and books, including *God on the Job* and *Alive in the Spirit*.

"A unique blend of inspiration, compassion, and practical advice, every person coming to grips with the mental health problems of a loved one deserves to hear the message of hope, love, and faith infused within this book." Kim T. Mueser, Ph.D., co-author of *The Family Intervention Guide to Mental Illness*

"Effective, practical strategies for families and friends of people who struggle with mental illness. Each chapter is punctuated by real stories of hope, as well as questions for discussion or personal reflection. A handy, useful toolkit." Herbert E Mandell, M.D., National Medical Director of Kids Peace

"An invaluable resource. I wish my own loved ones had had it sooner, and I'll be sharing it with them now. Highly recommended." Marya Hornbacher, author of *Madness: A Bipolar Life*

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