

## A Course in Fun with Fast Eddie: 10 Ways to Turn Life's Journey into a Joyride

**Karen Wiand**

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*A Course in Fun with Fast Eddie is a poignant, sensitive, and fierce memoir that exposes the difficulties faced by those who are mentally challenged.*

*A Course in Fun with Fast Eddie* is the warm and inspiring story of how the rekindling of an unusual childhood friendship taught Karen Wiand the true meaning of life.

Eddie Lee and Wiand were neighbors as children, but their lives couldn't have started off more differently. While Wiand was born into a loving family, the infant Eddie was saved from death by starvation when social services found him in a pile of newspapers in his destitute parents' home. Adopted by a loving couple, Eddie was encouraged to develop to the best of his ability despite his physical and mental impairments.

"Fast Eddie" got his nickname as a child, when he was known for racing around town on his bicycle, making friends with everyone he met. Bullied and judged in his youth and later defrauded and abused in the adult foster care system, he never stopped believing in himself or lost his ability to show up for each new day with an open and happy heart.

Wiand's book traces Eddie's life from his childhood to his adulthood, focusing on their time together after years of separation. Detailing the facts could have been a bleak and depressing task had it not been for Eddie's response to every obstacle he met. The book shares his knack for finding joy in almost everything and the way his unconditional love touched the hearts of those around him. Wiand's amazement at Eddie's "hidden" abilities is palpable as she records his achievements and the many ways he benefited his community. "Eddie ushers in each day like he's just walked out of the auditorium at a Tony Robbins motivational seminar," she writes when describing his vibrant, energetic personality.

The book takes a friendly and conversational tone. Each of its ten chapters reveals a straightforward, profound truth through the medium of story, showing how Eddie lives out each truth: staying active, knowing he will be okay, and treasuring everything. It also reveals an elegant logic as Eddie finds a way to express gratitude in an especially difficult situation, saying: "Thank God I'm not mad anymore."

Incisive descriptions and natural, easy dialogue move the book forward, demonstrating both harsh realities and the appreciation others around Eddie felt for his joy and goodness. It is thought provoking as it compares and contrasts the ways in which the lives of the intellectually impaired differ from those who are considered "normal."

*A Course in Fun with Fast Eddie* is a poignant, sensitive, and fierce memoir that exposes the difficulties faced by those who are mentally challenged while portraying a friendship that blessed two lives with happiness.

KRISTINE MORRIS (August 6, 2019)

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