



## Getting Here from There: The First 10 Years

**Clara Atmane**

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*Thoughtful and inspiring, Getting Here From There is a memoir about overcoming childhood trauma.*

Clara Atmane's intimate and moving memoir, *Getting Here From There*, recounts her first decade and shows how she rose above the trauma inflicted during these years.

Atmane's birth marked the beginning of her mother's mental illness. Growing up as the sixth child in a farming family, Atmane became branded by her older siblings as the child who caused her mother's illness. Her childhood would continue to be marred by devastating instances of sexual abuse, emotional detachment from her father, and demeaning events perpetuated by her teacher. Still, Atmane navigated her difficult and problematic first ten years to become a social worker and later a lawyer.

The impact that Atmane's childhood years had on her later life is made evident by the paralleling of her memories with her current experiences. In January 2018, while thinking on the topic about loneliness, Atmane remembered a significant experience in which she was left behind in a town. When she got home, it was already dark. She was devastated to find out that her family had not noticed her absence.

The writing is pensive. It queries aspects of events and draws the meaning and impact out of each. Growing up, Atmane was fond of her mother and grandfather. However, as years passed, memories of the beautiful moments they had together began to fade. In the book, she investigates why this started happening and why she allowed herself to forget the good times.

Atmane's childhood years are set in a quiet farming community in a family that believed in instilling proper values, though it also enabled heartbreaking experiences of child molestation and isolation. The serenity of the background is used to create a sharp contrast to harsh personal experiences. Powerful, inspiring demonstrations of tenacity arise as Atmane dedicates herself to her studies and works hard to become a lawyer, eventually working with other victims as a prosecutor. Still, there are frustrations, as when the murder of a twelve-year-old boy occurred without enough evidence to punish the perpetrators.

The book's tone is candid in expressing difficult instances and inner turmoil, including struggles to overcome an eating disorder, constant fear arising from growing up in a dysfunctional family, and feelings of loneliness. Its present-set diary entries recount past events alongside everyday activities and feelings, resulting in a close, comprehensive account.

Thoughtful and inspiring, *Getting Here From There* is a memoir about overcoming childhood trauma.

EDITH WAIRIMU (February 27, 2020)

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