



Taking Control of Schizophrenia: My Story

Stewart Lightstone

iUniverse (Aug 26, 2021)

Softcover \$13.99 (144pp)

978-1-66322-730-0

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Stewart Lightstone's *Taking Control of Schizophrenia* is an empowering self-help guide.

Assuring people with schizophrenia that they can take full ownership of their lives and reap happiness and success, this encouraging book begins with "the basics," sharing Lightstone's understanding of thought process disorders, experiences with schizophrenia, and advice for facing fear and anxiety. It emphasizes the importance of one's attitude when it comes to addressing future challenges, too.

To take control in the midst of schizophrenia, a disorder that it says can seem uncontrollable (more so if one is transitioning from hospitalization back into mainstream life), the book shares advice for getting support, finding happiness, and communicating with others. Its ultimate goal is to help others to fully participate in the world, and to solve their problems in an effective, independent manner.

Still, the book's encouragements amount to personal, not professional, advice. While some of its compelling advice is based on evidence, as with its neuroscientific presentation of schizophrenia and its coverage of emotional and behavioral intelligence, much of it draws on Lightstone's individual experiences and unshakable belief in the power of positive thinking. It aims to be adaptable to each person's life, attributes, and goals; in tone, it evinces deep respect for others living with schizophrenia, whom it says often lack for clear affirmations.

Though it is vulnerable about sharing Lightstone's story, the book is also careful to afford focus to others going through similar challenges; its broad focus is complementary to its ultimate goals. And the personal elements of the book are engaging, including Lightstone's self-assessment after his first psychiatric hospitalization: "I thought I was a complete write-off, with no hope and no future, a bona fide crazy man, fit to be tied." Indeed, his voice is warm and clear, even in navigating his bewildering struggle.

The book's decision to address its audience as "friends" further imparts its sense of respect and reciprocity; such moments are an empowering force. But the book's quick pace and short chapters mean that much work is left to be done by its end. The appendices are a more practical element of this brief work; they include advice for caregivers, an inspiring list of affirming statements, and positive adjectives for self-description.

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MELISSA WUSKE (January 11, 2022)

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