



Expecting the Broken Brain to Do Mental Pushups:
A Personal Journey
to Understanding Schizophrenia and Depression
Dave Elder

Author Bio

Short version:

Writer, musician and filmmaker Dave Elder focuses his creative urges on spreading a message of peace and understanding that takes many forms. He wrote a book about schizophrenia and depression with the intent of sharing his own experiences and lessons learned, hoping that such an account could help to broaden the cultural dialogue around these issues, contribute to a greater overall understanding of mental health, and advocate for more sympathetic treatment for those who suffer from mental difficulties.

More details:

Dave started writing songs at the age of 14, though by then, he had already been pounding out random sounds on the family piano for over 10 years, but writing songs gave shape to his melodic musings. At first, he primarily found inspiration in expanding his musical explorations, with his lyrics often lagging months behind. However, after he began widening his own personal horizons, moving as a young adult to a big city in a different time zone from the small country town where he grew up, his words took on a deeper and more thoughtful tone, ranging far beyond the love/relationships territory that had defined most of his early lyric endeavors.

While Dave has directed most of his inventive energy into writing, performing and recording songs, he always had a vague notion about writing a book. During his high school days, he made a few brief typewriter attempts at a sort of soap-opera-style novel, and after that, the book idea receded for a few decades, but following his revelations about schizophrenia and depression, it returned, activated by a more urgent sense of purpose.

A strong concept of justice, and a deep feeling of outrage against *injustice*, animates much of Dave's work, including this book. Applied to mental health, this concern encompasses the unnecessary use of violent force that law enforcement all too often employs against those with mental problems, the expensive and pointless criminalization that the authoritarian War on Drugs has forced upon millions of people around the globe who have had the misfortune to feel a compelling need for some pain-killer or stimulant that didn't fall within the legal framework, the callous indifference prominent politicians sometimes show regarding provisions for adequate funding of mental health facilities and related training, and the careless way that family members and friends frequently treat someone within their circle who struggles with a mental disorder. The writer freely admits to being guilty of that last offense himself, on the pages of this publication.

Dave always strives to deliver his message in a basic form that can reach a large general audience without requiring specialized knowledge, and his book certainly fits that model. In *Expecting the Broken Brain to Do Mental Pushups*, he begins at the point of witnessing the onset of his mother's schizophrenia months before his 4th birthday, which far exceeded his grasp, and from there, he sketches the signposts along a ramble that arrived at an unexpected moment of clarity months after his 50th birthday. He recounts his caregiver experiences quite simply, and explains his discoveries in layman's terms, with the thought that perhaps his tale can make some waves in the direction of a much larger and better-informed conversation about mental health.