



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

Dave Elder

Author Bio

Short version:

Filmmaker, musician and writer Dave Elder now lives in the upstate New York home where he grew up, after spending decades living in other places. In addition to promoting the new edition of his book, and possibly his 2011 video DVD *The View from Here*, Dave, when he can find the time, also performs and records as a solo singer/songwriter.

More details:

Dave left his home town at the age of 17 to attend college at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Following his college years he remained in Evanston for a while, taking a couple of breaks to spend some months in Atlanta, Georgia. His time in the Chicago area included a short career as a cab driver.

In the summer of 1978 he hitch-hiked to San Francisco, and then spent a decade living in Oakland and Berkeley. His West Coast experience included many musical adventures, among them a country pick-up band which led to a short story called *I'm Just the Bass Player* that he wrote down and got into print a couple of decades later.

In 1988 Dave returned to the East Coast to prepare for family responsibilities that he knew would eventually involve him. He lived in the New York City area, which gave him a base from which to try to chart his own course through the East Coast singer/songwriter scene while staying close enough to the family Upstate that he could respond on short notice to the calls that he knew would come.

While he couldn't know the hour or the day, he saw his grandmother and grandfather slowly declining, and their deaths in 1991 and 1993 were not unexpected. The call about his father a little more than 3 years later, however, came completely out of the blue, and put him and his 2 brothers suddenly in charge of their mother's care. As a result, Dave and his younger brother learned a lot about schizophrenia in a very short time.

Late in the year 2000, Dave began work on a video documentary about a group of realist artists from the New York City area that he had met in the preceding years. About a year after he began this project, he had his second experience with clinical depression, which led him to a similar moment of clarity with that condition as the one he had had a few years earlier with his mother's schizophrenia. He spent another decade working on the documentary and living in the New York City area. As the project neared completion, his mother died, in May of 2010. A few months later, in September, he moved back to the upstate New York home where she had lived, and where his older brother still lived. He didn't know then, and would not find out until 5 months later, that his older brother was dying of liver cancer. The brother died in March of 2011, a few months before Dave finished *The View from Here*, in August of that year.

Dave had already started writing *Expecting the Broken Brain to Do Mental Pushups* a couple of years earlier, and completing his documentary gave him time to concentrate on the book. With the unasked-for help of a major flood that gave him time to write, he finished the book about a year later.

Then, as time went on, Dave had more and more disagreements and arguments with people who question the brain chemical balance theory, and he also heard figures on public media assert that it has no validity, to the point that he now feels he has a duty to pass his understanding along to as many fellow humans as he can.