



# **My Schizophrenic Life: The Road to Recovery from Mental Illness**

*Sandra Yuen MacKay*

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## **My Schizophrenic Life: The Road to Recovery from Mental Illness** Sandra Yuen MacKay

Vancouver artist Sandra Yuen MacKay has an abnormality of the brain - a disease called schizophrenia. As she says, "my life is schizophrenic because I have schizophrenia. It will always be there." Much of her life has been a struggle to cope with the symptoms of her disease and the side effects of the medications required to keep those symptoms in check. Early in her life, Sandra started to exhibit the typical symptoms of this disease which came as a surprise to her unsuspecting family. Her book chronicles her struggles, hospitalizations, encounters with professionals, return to school, eventual marriage, and success as an artist, writer and advocate. "Remarkably compelling...the book takes on a life of its own...a gripping narrative" Library Journal "There are precious few people who have experienced psychosis and can convey it accurately, clearly, and concisely. Sandra MacKay's story is an important one for all of us in the mental health field --doctors, patients, and their families. It is imperative that we take in the lessons she is imparting to us all, on how to manage, and in many ways, triumph, over chronic mental illness." Julie Holland, MD author, *Weekends at Bellevue: Nine Years on the Night Shift at the Psych ER.*, New York city

## **My Schizophrenic Life: The Road to Recovery from Mental Illness Details**

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# **From Reader Review My Schizophrenic Life: The Road to Recovery from Mental Illness for online ebook**

**A. says**

I don't even know what to say about this book it was so good, useful, and helpful.

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**Lori Henry says**

A powerful and honest look into one woman's life with schizophrenia. Courageous!

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**Jen Knox says**

This is a very straightforward, honest and personal account of one woman's battle with schizophrenia. As a person who has seen what this illness has done to people I love, I was particularly drawn-in by the subject matter, and I am therefore probably extremely biased. That said, there's no denying that MacKay wrote a very enduring and important book about the topic, one will strike an emotional cord and open the eyes of those of us who are currently not afflicted with the disease. A memoir that raises empathy and tells a good story always has my support.

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**Darcia Helle says**

This is a profound true story, told by a remarkable woman. Sandra Yuen MacKay bravely steps forward and shares her experience as a person living with schizophrenia. Her journey is both heartbreaking and inspiring. She shows us the truth of this mental illness and reminds us that a person is not defined by the illness he/she lives with.

There is so much good in this book. Sandra finds hope in a difficult world. She finds love and acceptance. And she openly shares those gifts with us all.

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**Wendy says**

**So informative!**

This is a great opportunity to finally understand what my son hasn't been able to put into words. He told me that Sandra had been able to explain what was going on in his head to him so he could tell me and me get it. I had to read it and now I do get it as much as I can. A lot of things make more sense in retrospect. He's been diagnosed and accepted the offer of treatment. This book gave him hope. Thank you Sandra, from both of us.

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## **Stuart says**

Sandra Yuen Mackay's memoir, 'My Schizophrenic Life' is a courageous and moving story of living with the (seldom written about) mental illness schizophrenia. The author does a wonderful job of sweeping the reader into her world, beginning with the confusion as a teenager when the illness entered her life, through the many challenges of trying to cope while living in the anomalous world of schizophrenia.

Having experienced psychosis as a direct result from epileptic seizures, I was personally drawn into the content. I found the story easy to follow and informative. For anyone who would like to know what it's like to live each day with a mental illness, I highly recommend, Sandra Yuen Mackay's brave and ultimately uplifting story.

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## **Sandra MacKay says**

As the author of this book, I reflected on the last 30 years of struggling with a mental illness and my journey of recovery. Currently, my diagnosis is schizoaffective disorder. I wrote this book to inspire and educate others about a stigmatized illness. Readers that have previewed my book found it to be captivating. I surely hope you'll read it when it is released in September 2010.

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## **Maria says**

'My Schizophrenic Life' is a memoir about Sandra Yuen Mackay's experience of living with schizoaffective disorder. It is ultimately a book about how Sandra has coped with the illness and more importantly the lessons she has learnt from it and how she has been able to recover, although the author does still suffer from symptoms but has now been able to find a way to almost control the effects. The book is a fascinating and compelling story giving valuable insight of the view of the world from the perspective of someone with a mental illness. Sandra's story will definitely benefit anyone who may be currently living with a diagnosis or suffering from any type of mental illness, as Sandra has described how she was able to seek help and find different techniques to stop or reduce the severity of some of her symptoms. This book will also help anyone living with or caring for a relative or friend who may be suffering from schizoaffective disorder.

Sandra has told the story of her 30 year battle with the illness. At first she was diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. It highlights the fact that mental illness is something that is very difficult to diagnose, as there are many different symptoms and each individual suffers in different ways; the triggers for the symptoms will vary from person to person.

In many ways this book is important as it breaks down a barrier of ignorance about mental illness. Here we are told a story by a very intelligent, creative woman who works as an artist and writer and has used her experience of suffering with this disorder to help others, by taking part in talks and public speaking.

Sandra's symptoms began when she was a teenager, and I found it fascinating to read about the way she would hear and see things that were not there and have profound delusions and paranoia. In some ways there are so many things from Sandra's memories of her teenage years that everyone could relate to. Paranoid feelings, delusion and depression are things that we have all felt to some degree in our lives, but the way

these things would manifest in Sandra's mind shows just how frail our vision of reality can be and how easily it can be distorted when there is a chemical imbalance in the brain causing mental illness.

By reading Sandra's story I personally feel that I have learnt a great deal about how Schizophrenia can affect someone's life, and her story has illuminated for me a subject which seems to carry an unworthy stigma. I have always believed that mental illness is just like any other illness and yet the mentally ill are generally feared and treated as if it is almost their fault that they have this illness. I felt that the way many of Sandra's therapists spoke to her when she was a teenager showed a general ignorance about mental illness.

Sandra Yuen Mackay's book is very important as a bridge to understanding how a mentally ill person feels. She is a great advocate and has put her story across in a way that is compelling and easy to understand. I would recommend this book to everyone. Its worth is not only in helping to dispel certain myths surrounding mental illness, but it's also the story of a person who has overcome great adversity and is now successful and an example to us all.

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### **April Helms says**

This fulfills the challenge for reading a book that has a main character with a mental illness. This "main character" is actually an autobiography penned by MacKay, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a teen. She pulls no punches; MacKay is honest about her struggles and shortcomings in dealing with her illness, and the difficulty of her recovery and managing her life. The reader, through her eyes, gets a glimpse of what schizophrenia is like and why it is such a difficult illness to treat. MacKay freely admits she was not always a model patient. But MacKay was able to work through not just schizophrenia but her own inherent insecurities to become an author, a public speaker and an artist. This is a human story, from a point of view that is often not heard. IT might not be the most polished of narratives but I think that's part of its charm and honesty. All in all, it's an insightful and quick read.

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