



Through the Glass Wall: A Therapist's Lifelong Journey to Reach the Children of Autism

Howard Buten Ph.D.

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A remarkable testament of hope and love, these pages recount Howard Buten's lifelong journey working with autistic children. For three decades his pioneering, often controversial approaches have enabled him to gain access to their strange and solitary universe—a universe he shares in a book that is unlike any you've ever read.

From his first unforgettable encounter with a wild, clawing human hurricane in the form of a little boy named Adam S., clinical psychologist Howard Buten has sought ways into the seemingly closed world of the autistic child. Whether he's done this by letting himself be pummeled, scratched, and bitten, or by imitating the child's behaviors, or by feeling himself into what the child must be feeling, he has often been rewarded. With extraordinary insight and in ways that are powerfully moving, he brings to life as never before the innermost selves of these children.

Among those you'll meet in the clinic he founded in Paris are Lise, whose seemingly random movements are as expressive as a dancer's; Florian, who can instantly tell you on which day of the week your birthday falls for any year, past or future; Martin, whose nonstop speech echoes the angry voices he has heard all around him, but who is impervious to the emotions they contain; and Hakim, a child so lost and so violent, no other institution will take him.

Writing with a scientist's clarity and a humanist's heart, Buten conveys the reality of autism with passion, ruthlessness, humor, wisdom—and love. This is a book both heartbreaking and hopeful, and when he succeeds in breaching the invisible wall of aloneness that seems to separate the autistic from the rest of us, we cheer.

From the Hardcover edition.

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