



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

### Synopsis

When Dave Elder's mother didn't come home after giving birth to his younger brother, she seemed to have developed a strange new sickness. She does come home after a while, but as a changed young woman who sometimes says and does things her family can hardly understand. Dave learns the word *schizophrenia* at some point growing up, but cannot truly grasp its meaning.

As an adult living his own life in places far from his home, Dave doesn't go looking for better understanding of psychiatry, but bits and pieces of the puzzle come his way, and then, in September of 1995, living in the New York City area, he finds himself in the role of caregiver for someone with *clinical depression*. During this first encounter he understands no more about depression than he does about schizophrenia and he emerges from the episode with more questions than answers. However, not long after, in July of 1996, his father dies and Dave also takes on the caregiver role for his mother, sharing that responsibility with his two brothers. Through mistakes made, lessons learned and some informational TV segments, Dave soon arrives at the moment of definitional clarity with schizophrenia. A few years later, still caregiver for the person with clinical depression, Dave arrives at such a moment with that condition as well.

In this chronicle of his personal journey, Dave gives a very honest and open portrayal of his misunderstandings along the way. One reason to do so is the possibility that anyone who becomes a caregiver for someone with schizophrenia, clinical depression or bipolar disorder might make at least some of the same mistakes, and Dave's own journey clearly shows that misunderstanding can sometimes be a necessary and unavoidable part of the process. Dave's story guides the reader to a moment of clarity about the basic nature of these psychiatric conditions without making too much or too little of them. Such understanding can be crucial for someone acting as a caregiver, but can also benefit others who find themselves interacting with someone suffering from one of these mental conditions. Further, western culture as a whole might benefit from a more open and well-informed discussion of mental issues, and Dave's book can add a different and seldom-seen perspective to the discussion regarding schizophrenia, clinical depression and bipolar disorder, coming from the point of view of the caregiver and non-professional observer.

**For more information about the book:** [www.mentalpushups.com](http://www.mentalpushups.com)

**For media inquiries:** Dave Elder, [dave@mentalpushups.com](mailto:dave@mentalpushups.com)

347-232-1082