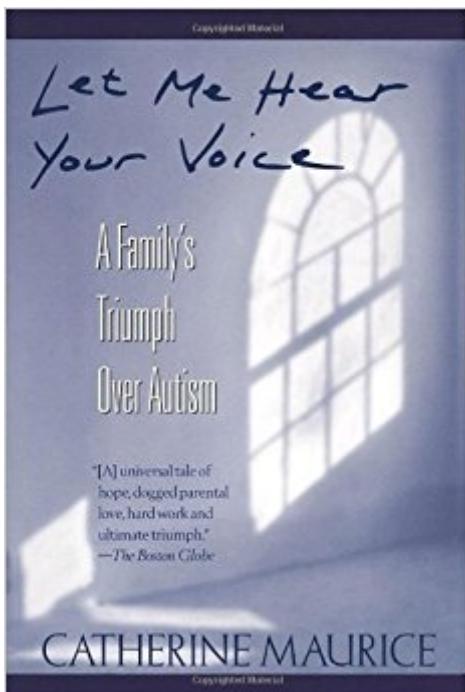


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# Let Me Hear Your Voice: A Family's Triumph Over Autism



## Synopsis

She was a beautiful doelike child, with an intense, graceful fragility. In her first year, she picked up words, smiled and laughed, and learned to walk. But then Anne-Marie began to turn inward. And when her little girl lost some of the words she had acquired, cried inconsolably, and showed no interest in anyone around her, Catherine Maurice took her to doctors who gave her a devastating diagnosis: autism. In their desperate struggle to save their daughter, the Maurices plunged into a medical nightmare of false hopes, "miracle cures," and infuriating suggestions that Anne-Marie's autism was somehow their fault. Finally, Anne-Marie was saved by an intensive behavioral therapy. *Let Me Hear Your Voice* is a mother's illuminating account of how one family triumphed over autism. It is an absolutely unforgettable book, as beautifully written as it is informative. "A vivid and uplifting story . . . Offers new strength to parents who refuse to give up on their autistic children." -- Kirkus Reviews "Outstanding . . . Heartfelt . . . A lifeline to families in similar circumstances." -- Library Journal

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When my fourth child was diagnosed with "PDD", I was happy. That was how ignorant I was--I thought it meant he wasn't autistic! Six years and one more autistic child later, I still credit this book with giving me a foothold and a way of grasping how to deal with the educational interventions that I feel continue to remain most viable for so many autistic children. I had nothing but my own gut feelings, one other book called "Children with Autism", and this book to guide me in the beginning

stages of what would prove to be the longest, most incredible journey I have ever made in my life. It's still evolving, and so are we, in my family. Because of this book, I garnered the strength to look into educational intervention for my first autistic son in the way of a "home program". I didn't know anything about what a "home program" entailed until I read this book. I didn't know that the optimal time you must devote to a program such as this has been set at 40 hours a week! I didn't know that there wouldn't be any trained therapists available--I had to be trained myself, in fact! I found babysitters, one high school girl, you name it--at one point I was so desperate I dissolved in tears and said, "I CAN'T DO THIS! " But you have to. YOU JUST HAVE TO. And you will, too, because you must. As my supervisor said to me when she "okayed" us for the program, "Look at it this way--two years of your life will make such a difference." And it did. Not the success story the author had, but at least a sense of control over things and an awareness of my son's potential. This book gave me something to hang on to.

When I read some of the comments about this book I was really saddened. I can agree that there is no "cure" for autism, but I must also note that Applied Behavioral Analysis, being the therapy of choice for the Maurice family, has given my child a new life. This book is different because it offers parents hope: It clearly describes the trials a family endures as they struggle to bring their autistic child into their world. There is absolutely nothing wrong with fighting this disorder. After all, we should all want the very best for our children. We should all want our children to be able to function normally in society. I have patiently read through every review and wish to make a few comments of my own, having implemented an ABA program with my now 3-year old son, for nine months. ABA is rigorous therapy. It requires time and effort on everyone involved. But, it is worth every struggle, be it financial or otherwise. In no way has ABA therapy, as described in this book, harmed my child. I have not met anyone, nor have I heard of a family, who was not thrilled with the progress made by his/her/their child through ABA therapy. Our child has gained two years worth of development within a six-month period of having ABA therapy. In fact, my child scored a 37.5 (a half point above severely autistic) on the CARS (childhood autism rating scale) and is now considered to have "no autistic symptoms." We are also advocates for the Gluten-Free/Casein-Free Dietary Intervention; both ABA and dietary intervention are responsible for our son's miraculous progress...backed by lots of prayers. My husband and I cannot technically "afford" ABA therapy. We cannot afford to hire endless nannies and therapists.

This is a well-written and interesting book. Catherine Maurice's devastating criticisms of the

fraudulent therapies which attempt to make mothers feel guilty for their children's autism would alone make the book worth reading. However, I have three very major concerns about the book. The first is that Maurice presents Lovaas's version of ABA as the only possible option, ignoring the fact that there are other educational methods (such as TEACCH, Greenspan, or the various other techniques within the behavioural field such as the Koegels' modifications of ABA), which also have solid scientific evidence backing them. Secondly, she also ignores the experts who have raised doubts about Lovaas's claim to have effected complete "recoveries" from autism, and who have pointed out that greatly improving a child's level of functioning, while vitally important, is not the same as a "cure". I've seen too many parents who read Maurice's book and immediately start to plan on the basis that after a few years of Lovaas treatment, their child will be completely normal. The overwhelming balance of evidence is that as a rule autistic children grow up to be autistic adults. We (I have high-functioning autism) may grow up to be independent, happy and successful adults, such as Dr. Temple Grandin, but we remain "different", and often experience great stress from the constant pressure placed on us by families and society to be more "normal". Thirdly, I was worried by the way in which she constantly treats autism as a tragedy and a fate worse than death, and speaks of dragging her children kicking and screaming out of autism, forcing them to be "normal".

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