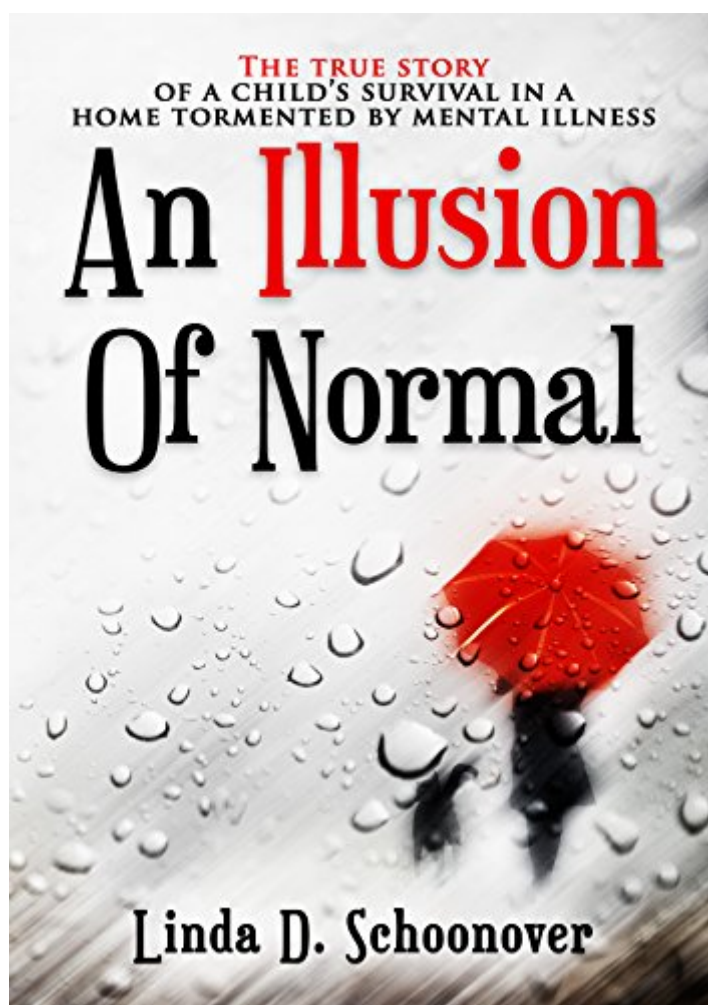


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# An Illusion Of Normal: The True Story Of A Child's Survival In A Home Tormented By Mental Illness



## Synopsis

An incredible story about the resiliency of the human spirit that will change the way you see life. An Illusion of Normal is the riveting and award-winning memoir of the life of a child whose mother suffers from paranoid schizophrenia. At times shocking and heartbreaking, the author's story reveals the darkness in a home tormented by a parent's mental illness and the light that shows her the way out. In an era when speaking of mental illness was taboo, the author learns from an early age not to talk about her mother's bizarre behavior. Now her mother's escape from a would-be killer threatens to expose the family secret. They are not a normal family. After her mother's extended stays in mental institutions, the author accepts that her Mom will never be normal. That, she assumes, makes her abnormal as well. She wrestles against her father's abuse and constant shaming of her, her faith, and her friends. Will she ever feel normal in an abnormal family? Did God make a mistake? Why is she in a home where she doesn't feel loved and accepted? Is there a way for her to break away from the shame that holds her captive? An inspirational story for anyone searching for hope to overcome life's most difficult trials. In a time when stop the stigma should be screamed from every mountain, the author tells the truth. The truth about mental illness. The truth about how it affects those who are sick as well as their families. We put pink ribbons on everything from pens to socks to bumper stickers to declare the importance of understanding breast cancer. It is time we give the same attention to mental illness.

—Eva Marie Everson, best-selling author, *The Bipolar Experience*

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a serious eye-opener to adults who may be inflicting great suffering and damage to children who live under their influence or custody. In fact, many adults will relate to this story as children they once might have been surrounded by mentally affected adults. Disturbing at times, this is a book hard to put down, as along with the stressing scenes the reader still can hold on to a string of hope of deliverance. I was profoundly touched by this account and believe more people should be made aware of what they are doing to children under their care or even understand the kind of adults they have become after being influenced by disturbed adults.

Written in the first person, from childhood recollections, this is one of the books we like to pretend never happened. Surely, this is all a novel. This never happened. Just as the family spent effort pretending life behind their door was normal, those of us outside put effort into pretending we see nothing....walk on by. As the book progressed, the main thing that alarmed me was the father, who was apparently almost as disturbed as his wife. The resilience of the human spirit shines through the two young people as they survive, and learn to thrive. More than anything else, what it proves is an abusive, insane environment doesn't always produce abusive, insane people.

In a time when STOP THE STIGMA should be screamed from every mountain, Linda D.

Schoonover is telling the truth. The truth about mental illness. The truth about how it affects those sick as well as their families. We put pink ribbons on everything from pens to socks to bumper stickers to declare the importance of understanding and stopping breast cancer. It is time we give the same attention to mental illness. Eva Marie Everson Bestselling Author The Bipolar Experience

I was drawn to and subsequently enthralled with this story because it spoke to my past and Schoonover did a masterful job of writing her story. Her writing moved at a perfect pace, allowing

enough description and time for detail and insights into her childhood perceptions and yet not keeping the reader caught in the trap she lived in. I would recommend this book to everyone. It brings to light an environment that so many children and families deal with every day to varying degrees. An Illusion of Normal vividly portrays how children are at the mercy of their environments and how that environment writes their inner script that is overloaded with self-judgments not based on reality. I applaud Schoonover for her bravery in sharing her story and for her determination to save herself by removing herself from the illness, educating herself and finally working for the benefit of children coming from similar circumstances.

Barely into the book and I had tears in my eyes as I imagined myself in the shoes of the author who, at the mere age of 4, was faced with the prospect of losing her mother to death. This memoir is a touching tribute, and at times a revealing and confronting account of what life was really like growing up in a family that was touched by mental illness, making it different from most families, and yet, just like so many families in so many ways. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and am not surprised it was awarded first place in the non-fiction category by Word Weavers International!

I applaud this author for shutting up the silence about abusive home environments. There are many triggers in this book for me which I think is a good thing. We should never be complacent about children's suffering but do whatever we can to minimize this. Mental illness is a tricky one because society is geared toward towards helping the 'patient.' It is my experience that in many cases the innocent bystanders need assistance often even more so. Eloquently written and I hope and pray that this book will travel all the right places far and wide to make a positive difference in tormented households.

This book is amazing! It's a heartwrenching account of a disjointed family due to mental illness and how a little girl copes with it. It shows the hidden side of mental illness...the children! There are many illusions of normal in families today and the children are always the ones who suffer the lasting scars. If it wasn't for her Grandmother's love and teaching her about God's love, Linda Schoonover would not be the caring, loving, Christian woman she is today, encouraging children in similar situations and letting them know that there is hope! Her grandmother planted the seed in her and it is still growing! Read this very informative book and stand with Linda to help some child that you may know.

Linda, does indeed have the gift of storytelling. I couldn't put the book down but not only that, I was inspired by the author's courage to share this story, her story! I was also convicted. May I never be like the adults, in the story, that were aware of her tragic home life but never did anything to help.

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