

Hyper: A Personal History of ADHD

Timothy Denevi



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The first book of its kind about what it's like to be a child with ADHD, *Hyper* is a "haunting narrative that explores the world's most scrutinized childhood condition from the inside out" (*Nature*) that also illuminates the history of how we came to medicate more than four million children today.

Among the first generation of boys prescribed medication for ADHD in the 1980s, Timothy Denevi took Ritalin at the age of six and suffered a psychotic reaction. Thus began his long odyssey through a variety of treatments. In *Hyper*, Denevi describes how he made his way to adulthood, knowing he was a problem for those who loved him, longing to be able to be good and fit in, and finally realizing he had to come to grips with his disorder before his life spun out of control. Using these experiences as a springboard, Denevi also traces our understanding and treatment of ADHD from the nineteenth century, when bad parenting and even government conspiracies were blamed, through the twentieth century and drug treatments like Benzedrine, Ritalin, and antidepressants. His insightful history shows how drugs became the treatment of choice for ADHD, rather than individually crafted treatments like the one that saved his life.

Thought provoking and deeply intelligent, this is a remarkable book both for its sensitive portrait of a child's experience as well as for its thorough exploration of a remarkably complex and controversial mental condition and its treatment. "There's much to be learned in *Hyper*, about pushing boundaries and respecting them, about parenting, and about the special kind of triumph that can come as a result of hard-earned self-knowledge. Denevi has written a book about a condition that has been studied for a long time, but, truly, it hasn't been talked about like this" (*BookPage*).



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