



A Very Fine House: A Mother's Story of Love, Faith, and Crystal Meth

Barbara Cofer Stoefer

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A Very Fine House is an intimate memoir of a mother's Norman Rockwell family turned upside down by her daughter's descent into meth addiction and crime. Bright and beautiful, Annie is an unlikely candidate for meth. Living fast and hard on the streets of Bend, Oregon, she commits crimes against herself, the community, and her own family.

The author chronicles her child's addiction in a way that other writers have not written about addiction. What begins as an obsession to save her daughter, and a rage against God for allowing drugs to devour her college-age girl, transforms into release in a life changing letting-go-and-letting-God moment.

The reader is first introduced to the Stoefen family and Barbara's dream for its idyllic future. Kinks in the perfect life appear. When Annie's alcoholism, drug use, and criminality ensue, Barbara fights to save her. There is all-consuming grief and the devastating loss of not just her daughter, but her dream for her own life as well. Barbara eventually finds support and a new way of thinking. While she continues the battle to save her daughter, she ultimately finds the courage to save herself. The conclusion deals with Annie's recovery—and Barbara's. Both experience a spiritual awakening and are transformed. A new and better dream for Barbara's life is born.

A Very Fine House: A Mother's Story of Love, Faith, and Crystal Meth Details

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From Reader Review A Very Fine House: A Mother's Story of Love, Faith, and Crystal Meth for online ebook

Sharon says

No doubt about it...Mrs. Stoeffen knows what it's like to be the mother of an addict and holds nothing back as she shares the pain her family went through dealing with her daughter. As the mother of a recovering addict myself, but one with two children, I felt uniquely tied to this lady. It was like someone understood what I had been through all those years. Parents of addicts need this book!

Daisy says

What a wonderful book.

Wanda says

This was a well written account of a family challenged by addiction. The author is local to central OR and I was kind of enlightened about the resources available for recovery offered by organizations in my local community. My heart went out to this family and I commend Annie for her strength in recovery from both drugs and alcohol. Kudos to mom and dad for thier support and strength to say "NO" as Annie struggled to find her feet to realize she needed and wanted help to kick her habit(s). This is a tough love story with a hopeful ending.

Ms. Reader says

This is a heartbreaking, emotional book about a mother to a meth-addicted daughter. It is raw, real, and touching about the struggles and hardships that families go through when someone close to them (especially a child) is addicted to drugs.

I could NOT put this book down. The author does a brilliant job writing her story, without making it feel like a poor-me pity-party tale. I especially loved how she really explains the difficulties of drug addiction, getting clean and sober, and stay clean and sober. It's not as easy as "just stop doing drugs". There are so many challenges and difficulties the person has to go through and it is something they have to continue going through every day, for the rest of their lives. This book does an excellent job explaining all of this, and helping people understand what drug addiction is really like.

I highly recommend this book! It is a worthy read.

Carl says

Barbara Stoeffen's *A Very Fine House* is an inspiration and revelation, and beautifully written. A revelation, to me, because in my family we've had no experience with addiction and its impact on a family. An inspiration because Barbara, and her husband Pete's, story is one of love and courage, of not giving up and coming through dark times. And beautifully written, in an honest, clear voice that tells both one family's story and the story of drugs and addiction in our society. So whether our trials are less or more daunting, or different, from what the Stoefens went through, we can all learn from and be inspired, as I was, by their journey. Thank you Barbara!

Misty Nordyke says

In "*A Very Fine House*" Drug prevention activist and advocate for addicts, Barbara Cofer Stoeffen writes about her daughter's addiction. It is a deeply personal account of a mother's family turned upside down by her daughter's descent into meth addiction and crime.

It is gut wrenching to read about what the family must go through and the pain and hopelessness that they feel. The family tries to help, but the more they try the more it seems that she pulls away and feels as if they are trying to run her life. When times hit hard or close to rock bottom she calls for help, until the wanting and cravings take over again.

Finally the family has to learn to let go and let God.

Addictions need to be taken seriously and addicts need the proper help to hopefully overcome.

Addiction is undertreated in the United States.

Only one in ten addicts report receiving treatment at all.

There are many reasons why people have or start addictions.

Nearly a quarter of deaths each year are attributed to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Most drug addicts have a criminal record that will follow them everywhere and forever.

Nearly all job applications asks about criminal convictions.

But there is help out there and it can be successful! PLEASE REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!

National Alliance on Mental Illness:

www.nami.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration {SAMHSA}

www.samhsa.gov

Meth Action Coalition
www.methaction.org

Parent Pathway: Supporting Your Journey Through a Child's Addiction
www.parentpathway.com

Lighthouse Network:
www.notalone.org

Oxford Houses:
www.oxfordhouse.org

* I received this complimentary book from BookLook Bloggers for my honest review and opinions. *

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Lori says

Very good book written by a mother who has lived through the messiness and pain of a child with alcoholism and addiction. Stoefer is honest and transparent about her expectations and struggles with her meth addicted alcoholic daughter. I appreciated reading about her mother's heart and the struggles she battled within herself and with her daughter during some very hard years. Well-done.

Nancy says

A memoir of a mother and daughter's relationship and life together just before, during, and after an alcohol and drug addiction. There was a Christian theme running through the book but it wasn't too heavy handed. I actually questioned some of the mother's actions during the first half of the book because it seemed that she

glossed over alcohol and drug behaviors when her daughter was still pretty young before things got really out of hand. In my mind, perhaps she could have done more, said more, or something, but admittedly I was not there and not in her shoes and hindsight is 20/20. An interesting book about alcohol and drug abuse and the toll it takes on families.

Evelynkm says

I'm the mother of a 6-year-old with cancer, and this book had a lot to say to me about trust, faith, and control. Really a great book - the author has courage, humor, and hard-won good sense.

Apryl Rickert says

I saw so much of my sister in this book... A bittersweet connection of understanding. Also, as a social worker who deals with addicts on a daily basis this has given me a deeper look into the behaviors that have been barriers to their success. The differences illustrated between addiction versus abuse was an important learning point in this book for me.

David Cooke says

There are many books that chronicle a parents' journey with a child's addiction. The stories in these books are often similar as there are so many commonalities in every person's addiction driven lives.

What I particularly valued and appreciated in Barbara Stoeffen's story is the way in which she educates and enlightens the reader as she tells her story. It is not the story in itself that is particularly powerful, it is in the beauty of how story is told and how the writer shares inspiring bits of wisdom to the reader along the way.

This quote in the introduction says everything about the gift in this story. "Addiction in the family will change you. You can allow the change to consume and damage you, or you can embrace the lessons that life now presents." It is my hope that every parent who reads this book not focus on the outcome, but on the lessons in the journey. There is a wonderful gift in here for us all.

Jami Sikkink says

How I loved this book. How I came to love the woman who opened her heart and wrote this book. It was excerpted in a daily devotional I receive via email and it caught my attention immediately. I purchased it that same day. I am so glad I did, I would have been sad to have missed this family's story. I come away challenged, with a better understanding of addiction, for the addicts, for the families who walk the floors for them, for the difficulty of recovery. I am filled with a new compassion.

Beryl says

A Very Fine House

I've just finished reading a Very Fine House, reliving the years I spent in such a house with my daughter. If you've loved and anguished over a beloved child's struggle with abuse and addiction, you've lived in such a house. This house was built with love, then rocked to its foundation and shaken so mightily it's a wonder a foundation was left on which to rebuild. This is Stoeffen's gift to readers, the reality that what seems lost can be recovered. Stoeffen enjoyed an unusually close relationship with her daughter Annie, who shared everything with her mother until the day she stopped sharing. The signs were subtle at first, small emotional and psychological issues that gradually transformed a beautiful child into an insecure and uncertain young woman. While many of us saw this happen to our own children at a much younger age, Annie's descent into full-blown meth addiction until she'd reached college age. Like most of us, we struggled mightily to rescue our children from the darkness we saw engulfing them -- desperate fight we are bound to lose if we think it is up to us to save them. Beaten down by the rapid disintegration of her daughter's life, Stoeffen was forced to let go until Annie turned to her for help. While I'm filled with admiration for Stoeffen's wonderful narrative, for the expensive treatment program she managed to obtain for Annie in lieu of jail time, and for her supportive love of Annie as she fought to pull her life back together, it's Annie who made it happen. This young woman's struggle to emerge ached through my heart and fills me with joy.

Barbara Oberto says

Wow! What a read! I cried through my entire copy of Barbara Cofer Stoeffen's book, A Very Fine House: A Mother's Story of Love, Faith, and Crystal Meth....all in one sitting. It was both gut wrenching and mesmerizing.

This book is an eye opener for any parent who thinks that who their children are and what they have become is because of their parenting. Take not the credit nor the blame. Our children are solely their own persons, separate from us. While we can exert influence, we cannot ultimately control the outcome. To those of you who's children have individuated impressively, causing you only pride and no heartbreak along the way, please don't be so darn smug and please, please do not be so quick to judge other parents less fortunate. It's not all about you. A lot of who your children are is merely the luck of the draw.

As Stoeffen's memoir so chillingly illustrates, addiction can happen to anyone. It can happen in the best of families and to the most conscientiously raised and cherished child. Those children who come from families with a history of substance abuse or neuro-psych issues (ADHD, anxiety, mood swing disorder, OCD, schizophrenia, etc) or who have learning disabilities are especially vulnerable to addiction.

Ultimately it is the addict alone who must choose and stay in recovery. For this Barbara's daughter, Annie, now 7 years sober, deserves HUGE credit (The sad fact is that most meth addicts do not stay sober. Readers will note that several addicts of Annie's acquaintance died during relapse). However, anyone who succeeds at any challenging endeavor always has someone to thank. Barbara and Peter Stoeffen gave their daughter an unshakable knowing that she was deeply loved and cherished. When Annie went to the dark side they pulled out all the stops to save while at the same time refusing to enable her. Finally, as an alternative to prison and with the support of the somewhat skeptical sentencing judge, the Stoeffens threw Annie the life line of residential treatment. She grabbed it and has been working the program ever since.

This is a text on advanced parenting. Barbara Stoefen is my hero. She is the mom who did everything right from the time Annie was a small child and who stood resolute in her deep, unwavering and tough love throughout Annie's free fall into the hell and darkness of addiction.

Just as parents don't get to pick their children, children do not get to pick their parents. When God, in his infinite wisdom, looked around and choose Barbara and Pete to be her parents, Annie was blessed with what she would need.

Barbara Cofer Stoefen gets Five Stars from this reader.

Judy Herzanek says

Provides Hope for the Hopeless

A Very Fine House is the authentic account of one mother's struggle with her daughter's drug addiction. The story takes us on her roller-coaster ride with despair, confusion, anger, hope, discovery, faith and restoration.

Barbara's journey gifts the reader with a huge amount of wisdom and the kind of learning one only receives from having "been there." She shares her experience in a way that allows us to identify with her and say "yes, me too."

After countless drug-related experiences that threaten the family she learns valuable lessons. Barbara writes:

"We had a right to the sanctity of our own home, to not be held hostage by the outrageous behavior of an addict--even if that addict was one of us. We couldn't control Annie's choices, but we could certainly control our own."

Barbara Stoefen allows the reader to experience her family's journey through the darkness and finally into the light of recovery--for the family as well as their addicted daughter. This story is not about the recovery of the addict but rather, how one mother learned to survive, despite the choices of her addicted daughter.

She writes, "Learning we can't save our children, whether or not they are addicts, is the saddest lesson of my life. Choosing to survive my daughter when she was in active addiction--choosing to cross over to safety--is the scariest thing I've ever done."

This book is a treasure trove of wisdom--and hope for the hopeless.

~Judy Herzanek/Changing Lives Foundation

Why Don't They Just Quit? What families and friends need to know about addiction and recovery.

Co-author of: Why Don't They Just Quit? What Families and Friends Need to Know About Addiction and Recovery
