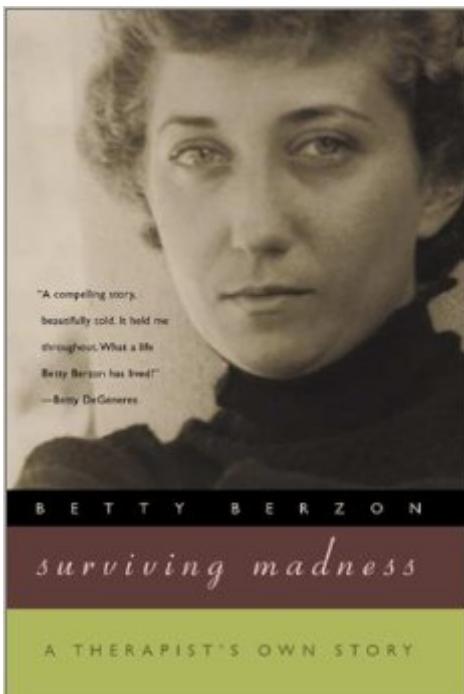


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Surviving Madness: A Therapist's Own Story (Living Out: Gay And Lesbian Autobiographies)



Synopsis

Betty Berzon, renowned psychotherapist and author of the bestselling book Permanent Partners, tells her own incredible story here. Berzon's journey from psychiatric patient on suicide watch "her wrists tethered to the bed rails in a locked hospital ward" to her present role as a groundbreaking therapist and gay pioneer makes for purely compelling reading. Berzon is recognized today as a trailblazing co-founder of a number of important lesbian and gay organizations and one of the first therapists to focus on means of developing healthy gay relationships and overcoming homophobia. Her sometimes bumpy road to success never fails to fascinate. Along the way she encounters such luminaries as Anaïs Nin, Eleanor Roosevelt, the Sitwells, Evelyn Hooker, and Paul Monette. Her recollections here provide a collective portrait of her fellow pioneers and a stirring lesson in twentieth-century history. It is, however, the intimate story of Berzon's own private passage toward self-discovery "from mental breakdown and suicide attempts, through hospitalization, eventual triumphant recovery, and her own coming out as an open lesbian at the age of forty" that makes this memoir an urgent, insightful, and deeply emotional testament to human survival.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In addition to being an autobiographical tale, Betty Berzon's memoir, "Surviving Madness," is an amazing account of the gathering of forces of humanistic psychology, social organizations, and

scientific truth that exploded in American life in the latter half of the twentieth century. Among the professional theories developed toward humanistic treatment, are client-centered therapy, therapeutic groups of a great variety and the scuffle to finally remove homosexuality as a disease from the APA list of maladies. Medical treatment and pharmaceuticals, too, developed during this period reduced the danger of STDs and new medical and surgical techniques to perform abortions. The medical side of this equation surely implies a woman's right to access to the control of their own reproductive systems. These new learnings, however undeniable, became a part of the fabric which lay behind greater sexual exploration when there were cures that had not previously existed. Thus, the century saw that aspect also supported by the U.S. Supreme Court. At the same time, other minority groups (e.g. gay men and lesbians) as well as ethnic minorities worked toward greater access to civil rights. Unbelievably, Betty Barzon was involved in leadership roles in many of those activities. Today, perhaps most people consider these developments "progressive," but at the time of their introduction, they excited much negative attention, especially those ideas concerning sexuality or racial inequity. A residue of protest against such change remains in the U. S. today. The telling of this history is all the more meaningful because author Burzon lived through that period of explosive change while "Surviving personal Madness.

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