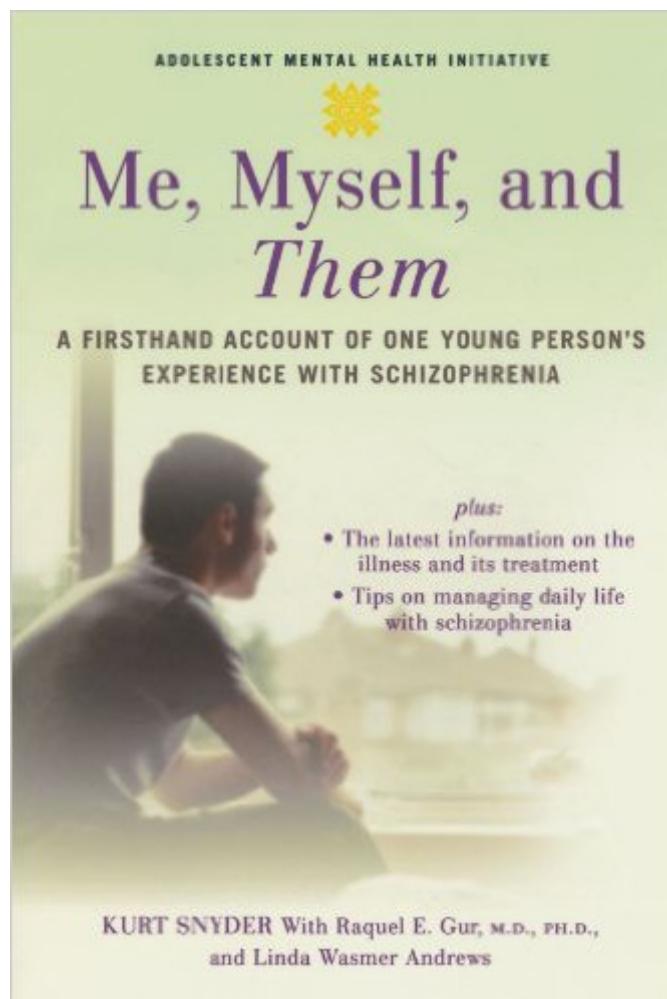


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# Me, Myself, And Them: A Firsthand Account Of One Young Person's Experience With Schizophrenia (Adolescent Mental Health Initiative)



## Synopsis

During his second semester at college, Kurt Snyder became convinced that he was about to discover a fabulously important mathematical principle, spending hours lost in daydreams about numbers and symbols. In time, his thoughts took a darker turn, and he became preoccupied with the idea that cars were following him, or that strangers wanted to harm him. Kurt's mind had been hijacked by schizophrenia, a severe mental disorder that typically strikes during the late teen or young adult years. In *Me, Myself, and Them*, Kurt, now an adult, looks back from the vantage point of recovery and eloquently describes the debilitating changes in thoughts and perceptions that took hold of his life during his teens and twenties. As a memoir, this book is remarkable for its unvarnished look at the slow and difficult process of coming back from severe mental illness. Yet Kurt's memoir is only half the story. With the help of psychiatrist Raquel E. Gur, M.D., Ph.D., and veteran science writer Linda Wasmer Andrews, Kurt paints the big picture for others affected by adolescent schizophrenia. Drawing on the latest scientific and medical evidence, he explains how to recognize warning signs, where to find help, and what treatments have proved effective. Kurt also offers practical advice on topics of particular interest to young people, such as suggestions on managing the illness at home, school, and work, and in relationships with family and friends. Part of the Adolescent Mental Health Initiative series of books written specifically for teens and young adults, *My, Myself, and Them* offers hope to young people who are struggling with schizophrenia, helping them to understand and manage the challenges of this illness and go on to lead healthy lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Let me just say that after purchasing this book I learned a valuable lesson: always read the reviews before buying. This book is very much like something I would have read as a freshman in Psych 101. In spite of the title, it tells surprisingly little of the author's story and focuses mainly on the causes and treatment of schizophrenia, and how to deal with it on a daily basis. Don't get me wrong, that is the intent of this book, and it was very well written, it was simply not the book I was looking for. Unless you have schizophrenia yourself, or are close to someone who does, this probably isn't the book for you. The patient, Kurt, tells his story in a very serious and straightforward way, with a lot of candor. Unfortunately, just when his story would start to draw me in, it would be interrupted by various vignettes, statistics, and case studies written by the book's co-authors (Raquel E. Gur, MD, PhD, and Linda Wasmer Andrews). I actually found myself skipping entire sections just to maintain the flow of Kurt's story. Despite having the disease over a period of years, Kurt's experience with schizophrenia is very condensed, and very little focus is put on the details of his hospitalizations, which is something I was curious about. This book serves its purpose as a rudimentary resource on schizophrenia; however, if you are looking for detailed memoirs of someone who suffered with the disease, this may not be the book for you. If you are curious about the mind of a schizophrenic patient, I would recommend

This book is one of a series of books by the Adolescent Mental Health Initiative founded by The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands. Its goal is to inform young people about the scientific research and treatment of common mental disorders including schizophrenia. Dr. Patrick Jamieson of the University of Pennsylvania states in the forward that the book is aimed at adolescents who are struggling. Kurt Snyder, the author of this volume, tells his story of developing and recovering from schizophrenia and does so from multiple points of view. It is his story but he does not ignore the fact that there are millions of people in the US (and elsewhere) who are also faced with this challenge. Like many with schizophrenia, he initially refused to take his medications and mixes his personal account with the big picture. While hospitalization is a not too pleasant experience for anyone, he points out that there may be times when it is required and lists the positive benefits to be achieved from being in hospital. What he does emphasize on P 89 is that schizophrenia is a very treatable disease. The fact that Kurt was on medication for six years at the time of writing and was

able to put his life back together again, should serve as a positive example for adolescents or anyone struggling with this issue. What is also important is that he reports that side effects of prescribed drugs have been infrequent. That is often one reason that people refuse to take what is prescribed. My only complaint is that the title is too close to the film *Me, Myself and Irene* which presents the old myth about schizophrenia as being multiple personalities.

*Me, Myself, and Them* is Kurt Snyder's own account of living with schizophrenia, an experience that began for him at the age of 18. But his account is supplemented by observations from an academic in the field of psychiatry, neurology and radiology (Raquel E Gur) and a journalist specializing in mental health issues (Linda Wasmer Andrews). It is hard to find anything much to criticize in this book. If I have one very minor criticism, it is that more hasn't been done to address the issues of stigma and stereotyping in connection with schizophrenia. These issues are not ignored, but they are dealt with rather fleetingly toward the end of the book. My own feeling is that these are very important matters that should have been raised earlier and dealt with more thoroughly (but this doesn't stop me from giving the book a five-star rating). As I see it, *Me, Myself, and Them* offers the reader two major benefits. First, it mixes personal experience with explanatory detail in a very readable way. Some of the background observations tend toward the technical, but they are offered in a straightforward and readily understandable way. The book also offers some guidance on legal and financial matters, thus adding another dimension to its more practical aspects. This book strikes the perfect balance between specialized medical description, advice for sufferers, ordinary everyday narrative, and emotional involvement. Second, and perhaps more important, is the fact that this is a very positive, optimistic book. It clearly gives the message that schizophrenia is treatable. While it cannot actually be cured, substantial recovery is achievable.

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