



# Allison's Suncatchers and Chains: A Journey with Autism

*Kris Jones*

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## **Allison's Suncatchers and Chains: A Journey with Autism** Kris Jones

Kris Jones and her husband, Gord, were thrilled when their beautiful baby girl was born. Months later, their joy turned to heartbreak when they realized Allison was not developing as other babies did. Her diagnosis of autism was complicated by severe epilepsy and a weak immune system, and as the years went by, they struggled to find ways to teach Allison even the most basic skills. They came to accept that there would never be a cure for Allison, but they persevered in the face of the enigmas she presented to ensure that she had the best quality of life possible within the chains of her disability. A journey of hope, despair, courage and love. The account you have before you is a heroic tale of love and dedication. The fact that there are families everywhere being asked to take this same journey and face these same challenges every day, makes it no less heroic. Perhaps you have watched a parent with their disabled child from a distance in a shopping mall, and you have held the hand of your own child more closely. Perhaps you know someone personally who has had to face the challenges of living with disability. But I am clear that there is no way to know the gifts and griefs of another, until you have "walked a mile in their moccasins." We are bystanders all, watching from the sidelines the lives of those around us. We cannot know, we can merely seek to intuit a corner of their experience. This book affords a glimpse into the heart of a mother and the world of her ongoing longing to find safety and fulfillment for her autistic child. It is an extraordinary account of the daily demands and frustrations, the joys and gifts of learning to surrender to a fact of life that you did not choose and would do anything to change. I first met Kris at a workshop in 1998; I knew that she had been under great strain and had committed herself to a path of self-healing. But until reading the book you now hold in your hands, it was not possible for me to fully understand the depth of pressure - emotionally, spiritually, physically and mentally - that has been her daily fare for years. She speaks of all that a family must bear as they seek to find their way through the myriad medical hoops, the numerous healing modalities, the possible care support, the ups and downs of swelling hopes and devastating disappointments. But within these same pages, you will see that peculiar gift that has been given to us as human beings. By some miraculous inner resource, some of us are able to create value out of what we do not desire, beauty out of heartbreak, and wisdom out of the sorrow and the setbacks of this incredible journey that is our life. I have felt somehow ennobled to have had a glimpse into the daily unfoldings of this amazing family, Gordon, Allison's father, Derek, her brother, and my dear friend, Kris. - from the preface by Ann Mortiffee

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