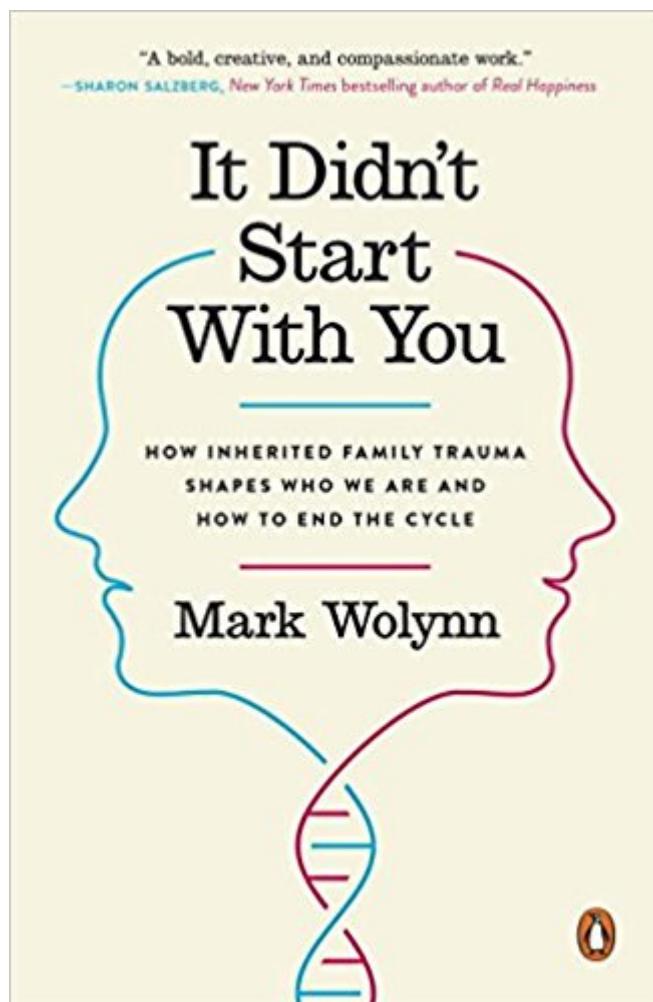


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# It Didn't Start With You: How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are And How To End The Cycle



## Synopsis

A groundbreaking approach to transforming traumatic legacies passed down in families over generations, by an acclaimed expert in the field — Depression. Anxiety. Chronic Pain. Phobias. Obsessive thoughts. The evidence is compelling: the roots of these difficulties may not reside in our immediate life experience or in chemical imbalances in our brains—but in the lives of our parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents. The latest scientific research, now making headlines, supports what many have long intuited—that traumatic experience can be passed down through generations. *It Didn't Start with You* builds on the work of leading experts in post-traumatic stress, including Mount Sinai School of Medicine neuroscientist Rachel Yehuda and psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, author of *The Body Keeps the Score*. Even if the person who suffered the original trauma has died, or the story has been forgotten or silenced, memory and feelings can live on. These emotional legacies are often hidden, encoded in everything from gene expression to everyday language, and they play a far greater role in our emotional and physical health than has ever before been understood. — As a pioneer in the field of inherited family trauma, Mark Wolynn has worked with individuals and groups on a therapeutic level for over twenty years. *It Didn't Start with You* offers a pragmatic and prescriptive guide to his method, the Core Language Approach. Diagnostic self-inventories provide a way to uncover the fears and anxieties conveyed through everyday words, behaviors, and physical symptoms. Techniques for developing a genogram or extended family tree create a map of experiences going back through the generations. And visualization, active imagination, and direct dialogue create pathways to reconnection, integration, and reclaiming life and health. *It Didn't Start With You* is a transformative approach to resolving longstanding difficulties that in many cases, traditional therapy, drugs, or other interventions have not had the capacity to touch. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *It Didn't Start with You* "Mark Wolynn does a masterful job of illuminating the ways in which our ancestors' unresolved suffering, often unknown to us, disables us and binds us painfully to them. He gives us the tools and skills—an approach that combines understanding, imaginative dialogues, and compassionate reconnection—to free and heal ourselves." James S. Gordon, MD, author of *Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven-Stage Journey Out of Depression*

"It Didn't Start with You takes us a big step forward, advancing the fields of trauma therapy, mindfulness applications, and human understanding. It is a bold, creative, and compassionate work." Sharon Salzberg, author of *Lovingkindness* and *Real Happiness*

"This groundbreaking book offers a compelling understanding of inherited trauma and fresh, powerful tools for relieving its suffering. Mark Wolynn is a wise and trustworthy guide on the journey toward healing." Tara Brach, PhD, author of *Radical Acceptance* and *True Refuge*

"Mark Wolynn's extraordinary book cracks the secret code of families and proves that you can go home again—once you understand how history made you. Full of life-changing stories, powerful insights, and practical tools for personal healing, *It Didn't Start With You* deserves a place on your bookshelf next to Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child* and Dan Siegel's *The Developing Mind*. You'll never see your family the same way again." Mark Matousek, author of *Ethical Wisdom*

"Bridging both neuroscience and psychodynamic thinking, *It Didn't Start with You* provides the reader with Mark Wolynn's hard-earned toolbox of do-it-yourself clinical aids and provocative insights." Jess P. Shatkin, MD, MPH, Vice Chair for Education at NYU Langone Medical Center's Child Study Center and author of *Child & Adolescent Mental Health*

"After reading *It Didn't Start with You*, I found myself immediately able to apply Mark Wolynn's techniques with my patients and saw incredible results, in a shorter time than with traditional psychotherapeutic techniques. I encourage you to read this book. It's truly cutting edge." Alexanndra Kreps, MD From the Hardcover edition.

Mark Wolynn is a leading expert on inherited family trauma. As the director of The Family Constellation Institute in San Francisco, he has trained thousands of clinicians and treated thousands more patients struggling with depression, anxiety, panic disorder, obsessive thoughts, self-injury, chronic pain, and illness. A sought-after lecturer, he leads workshops at hospitals, clinics, conferences, and teaching centers around the world. He has taught at the University of Pittsburgh, the Western Psychiatric Institute, Kripalu, The Omega Institute, The New York Open Center, and The California Institute of Integral Studies. His articles have appeared in Elephant Journal and Psych Central, and his poetry has been published in The New Yorker. From the Hardcover edition.

This book is an important one that I'm glad that the author took the time and effort to write. However, since it falls under the "self help" genre, I feel it's also important to make some distinctions about the audience this book best serves. Like another reviewer who wrote "avoid if you've overcome a toxic family", I think this book does not serve them well or anyone who was abused or severely neglected by primary caregivers, at least not initially in their healing process (and maybe not at all). I think a point not emphasized enough in the book is that the author himself spent 2 years on a spiritual journey BEFORE coming to the realization that emotional disconnectedness with his family was at the root of his own health problems (in other words, he did a lot of self-healing before attempting to connect with his parents). It makes perfect sense for him that re-establishing the emotional connection with his parents would be the logical solution to his own healing. Assuming his story is accurate about how his family was merely emotionally disconnected due to a mother stuck in grief and a father who suffered from low self esteem and there was not much in the way of emotional, verbal or physical abuse, this a perfect and beautiful situation in which re-establishment of emotional connection is the answer. However, in the case of abused and traumatized children by their caregivers, this is generally NOT the answer, and especially NOT the first step in the healing process. Abused and traumatized children have serious boundary issues, self-worth issues, difficulty forming healthy relationships, etc., that need to be dealt with first and foremost before attempting to restore relations with very unhealthy and toxic people who perpetrated the abuse. The caregivers are in fact the cause of the trauma and the issues and it is not simply a case of emotional disconnectedness with them. In other words, how can you emotionally connect with a person who is so emotionally shut down and disconnected that they abused their own children? It might be possible in some cases, but it is going to take a lot of energy and effort on the part of the abused

child (now an adult) to make it happen and they may even put themselves in danger by doing so. Plus this type of therapy can place an intense internal conflict on the abused child to "make right" what the parents did wrong to them by trying to reconnect with them. I think that's where this type of therapy can do some psychological damage if the facilitator/therapist is not careful. If there is a way to utilize this type of therapy with abused children, this book did not cover it, at least not in much depth and did not recommend resources for people who come from those types of families and situations. I hope that will be rectified in a new edition or perhaps another book.

I am deeply touched by Mark's book and happy to highly recommend it. He has found an inspiring way to share his personal life's experiences, those of clients he has worked with over the past 20 years and scientific research to create a smooth read, easy to follow exercises and a format, which really works to help one shine light into one's own life and that of one's family to bring forth subconscious patterns, which have been blocking one's healing and forward movement. I've been working with clients for the past decade and have experienced quite a few growth opportunities of my own. This book came to me synchronistically as I had been searching for a core wound to heal my relationship with my elderly mother and it was Mark's clear path throughout his book, his vulnerability sharing his own struggles and the questions and healing statements he shared, which gifted me not only the clarity of the wound that I have been looking for for years, but also the tools to heal it.

While reading *It Didn't Start With You*, I could not help but feel like Mark Wolynn was handing us readers that ever-elusive puzzle piece on a silver platter. In this case, the piece that ties together science, soul, and the shared familial bond that spans generations with something equally transcending — language. Mark's core language approach demonstrates that he has mastered what many professionals have only grazed — and that is the ability to listen - to truly hear what is coming through from the often unexposed crevices deep within. That the book could provide such an easy to follow process to enlighten all of us on a healing journey should come as no surprise, since again, Wolynn's mastery of language communicates his accessible and helpful therapeutic methods with the same ease as if he is confidently taking his charge's hands to guide them safely and securely across the street. *It Didn't Start With You* is transformational. Mark Wolynn's contribution will prove pivotal in the field of inherited family trauma.

Excellent scholarly research on multigenerational genetic traits and other effects to be aware of. This work is critical and must be followed and included in current medical research, education and therapeutic treatment of psychiatric cases in with all multigenerational opportunities both in independent practices and in social service and group treatment centers. In Public Government Funded Programs as well and Private Independent Offices. This will take a concerted effort. If there is interest shown, I will volunteer to organize a team to look into whether or not their is interest in exploring something like for the County of Boulder. Another route would be to to the Medical / Biology Department and ask them what they are currently working on and see if this dovetails with their current work? Maybe this would be a better fit down at CU Health Sciences in Denver ? If so, I could find a point of contact and drive down there and start there. It would be fantastic to have some energy in this from Colorado if they need extra hands and feet to help. I can certainly provide my CV / Resume.

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