



Dear Booksellers,

Thank you for your interest in *The Myth of Normal*, a book that took me three years to write (and rewrite and rewrite). *Myth* encompasses all that I have learned in more than three decades as a family physician, palliative care director, addiction clinician, and observer of human health, illness, and healing. The nearly ten years of research preceding the actual writing included studying many thousands of scientific papers and press reports and well over a hundred relevant books on topics ranging from physiology through history to psychology, sociology, and politics, as well as hundreds of interviews. It was a daunting task, at times intimidating but always inspiring.

My central theme is that health and illness are no random states, but instead are manifestations of lives lived in the context of relationships with other humans, with the natural environment, and with culture defined in the broadest terms. The epidemic of physical and mental illnesses and addictions in our present-day world represents the dysfunctions and traumas of a society where what is considered normal is out of alignment with core human needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual. Hence, I see diseases of mind and body as normal responses to fundamentally abnormal circumstances. This owes to the mind/body unity and the social nature of human beings that traditional wisdom has always honored and modern science has more than proven, and yet which mainstream medicine all but ignores.

Understanding the personal and social sources of illness from a truly holistic perspective, as I show, opens the pathway to healing both for the individual and for the society whose ailments individual suffering embodies. It is my most fervent wish to bring clarity about healing to an ailing world.

As a medical doctor with a background in history and literature, as an author with four previous books published in thirty languages, and, finally, as a therapist whose work is studied in over eighty countries, I am in a unique position to bring this unitary perspective to the reading public. I attempted to do so by combining science, insight, and personal narratives with a literary flair, an effort much aided by the collaboration of my son Daniel. I hope you agree we have succeeded, and I am deeply grateful for your support.

**Sincere best wishes,
GABOR MATÉ**