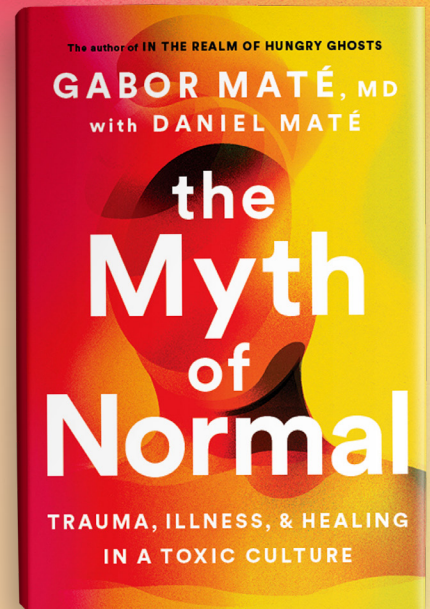


Key Takeaways from THE MYTH OF NORMAL

- **Despite our obsession with “wellness,” our health has never been worse**, both in the physical and mental spheres.
- **We need to first respect the bodymind:** There is nothing novel about the notion of the mind and body being intricately linked; what is new is any notion that they are not.
- **Human beings are biopsychosocial:** interconnected organisms whose health or illness reflects our relationship with our world—including family, class, gender, race, political status, and the physical environment.
- **Parents, in particular, are stressed from living in our materialist culture.** This situation has eroded the foundation of what children require to become fully-fledged, healthy human beings.
- **Happily, healing is not only possible, it is part of our nature to do so.** But first we must understand that our ideas about what’s “normal” are a damaging myth. Only then can we write a new, better story about ourselves.



The Path to Healing

In Dr. Maté’s writing, “healing” refers to a movement towards wholeness—a direction, not a destination. When we heal, we are engaged in recovering our lost parts of self, not trying to change or better them. Healing is not the same as being cured, but an end in itself.

Dr. Maté outlines the **4 A’s** for moving towards healing:

AUTHENTICITY: taking responsibility for our lives and personalities.

AGENCY: choosing based on gut feelings, not external expectations.

ANGER: healthy, self-protective anger reveals our boundaries to us.

ACCEPTANCE: as opposed to tolerance, accepting the truth of what’s happening is the only route to real change.

He then shares self-inquiry exercises to encourage connection with the self (e.g., what am I not saying no to? what is the impact of my difficulty saying no?).

“Gabor Maté is one of the most interesting and original voices now out there addressing the crisis of mental health in our culture. His ground-breaking work on addiction gave me a whole new way to think about the subject.”

—MICHAEL POLLAN, bestselling author of *How to Change Your Mind*

