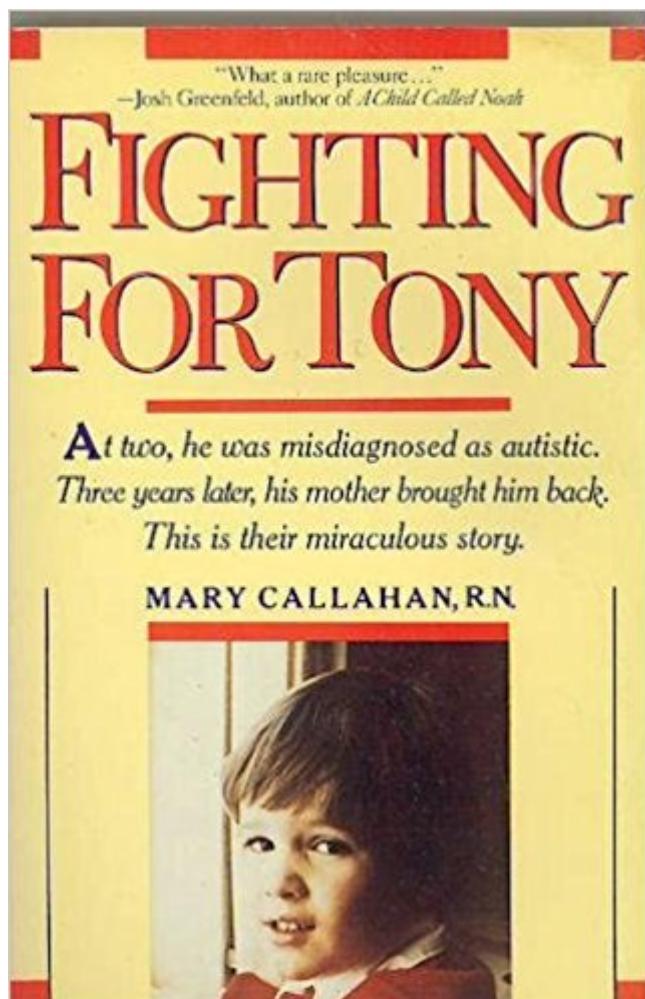


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# Fighting For Tony



## **Synopsis**

Fighting for Tony

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

When Callahan's son Tony was diagnosed as autistic at age two, she struggled to understand the condition about which little is known and worked tirelessly to help him improve. Her story takes us through Tony's early years, which included many bouts of screaming for nine hours at a time, head-banging, staring and generally nonresponsive behavior. This account about raising a difficult handicapped child stands out because of its honesty in discussing often ugly feelings. Callahan and her husband experienced extreme guilt, anger and shame, and for one harrowing moment they contemplated killing the boy. By age five, Tony began leading a normal life, and Callahan, a registered nurse, came to believe that a cerebral allergy to cow's milk may have caused Tony's autistic behavior and may account for autism in others. First serial to Ladies' Home Journal.

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This is a short, sweet account of the author's experiences with her son Tony, who at age two was diagnosed as autistic and by age five was functioning normally. His mother now believes that his bizarre behavior was a result of cerebral allergies, controllable by diet. Callahan describes the unfolding awareness of Tony's abnormalities, his diagnosis and early education, and most importantly the family dynamics involved in coping with such a child. Her marriage was stretched to the breaking point and her daughter became in some ways the savior of Tony and of Callahan.

herself. With neither bitterness nor a therapeutic axe to grind, Callahan truthfully examines self and family in a sad story with a happy ending. Amy Goffman, Children's Rehabilitation Ctr., Charlottesville, Va. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is such an important book! I have purchased many copies to give to parents of toddlers who are exhibiting autistic symptoms. Theories on brain inflammation have been around for a while, but largely ignored by practitioners who don't believe autism is treatable. David Schultz, M.D. Montpelier Va

IT IS SO MUCH EASIER TO UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD WHEN YOU REALIZE A FOOD OR CHEMICAL IS CAUSING HIS IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND IT IS NOT THEIR PERSONALITY, OR THEY ARE JUST BEING A BRAT. I WOULD "HIGHLY" RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO ANYONE THAT IS RAISING A "DIFFICULT" CHILD.

When Tony Randazzo was born in February 1978, he smiled within hours after his birth. However, even as an infant he did exhibit overtly autistic behaviors. His sister Renee was born a year and a half later in August of 1979. Tony, still nonverbal was by then enrolled in a special needs pre-school program. He and Renee plainly bonded from the start and, upon returning from pre-school, Tony bestowed his sister with a spontaneous kiss. Problems with behavior management arose; Rich and Mary Callahan eventually separated for two years. A chance viewing of the now defunct Phil Donahue show in 1980 led Mary Callahan to believe that Tony's problems were allergy based. It was during this time that Tony was taken off certain substances, milk included. While he showed improvements, milk was then not targeted as the culprit. Reading of how Renee and Tony interacted was heartwarming; indeed, these siblings were quite good for one another. Once milk was identified as causing Tony's problems, he was switched to a soy product. From that point on, he showed no trace of autism, which led Mary Callahan, a nurse, to believe the boy had a cerebral allergy. Tony's shadows were kept at bay until a family trip in 1983. He had two cartons of milk in his class, which led to a sad backslide into autism. Once he had a chance to sleep it off, literally, he showed absolutely no trace of autism. Renee and Tony were kept in the same grade because of Tony's auditory processing difficulties. This turned out to be a good move because they looked out for one another and worked well together. In fact, they worked so well together they staged a coup at a day care center! That was so funny! I just loved that part! It would be interesting to hear an update on Tony's continued progress and of Renee's work in a special needs center. It sounds as if Renee

had on-the-job training the first few years of her life. This in turn, no doubt, I believe, made her more effective in her line of work. I recommend "There's a Boy in Here" by Judy & Sean Barron along with this book. Sean, like Tony had autism and both young men were blessed with younger sisters who were extraordinary teachers who loved them unconditionally.

Having lived through the diagnosis of my son -- I can relate 100% with this book. The mother's feelings, the ability to press on while others are in denial..... It can be a lonely road at times. You become so desperate that you feel that one day your child will snap out of it. I read the reviews and thought it is easy for a reader to criticize not having gone through this. Mary, I apologize for their ignorance. As a result - in addition to the chelation therapy I also removed dairy from my son's diet. At first I saw little change until I put him back on milk and boy I saw the self stimming go out of control. His dad and I were at the verge of separation a few years ago as well. He was in denial while I was fighting the system - but thank God he is has come on board and is the most dedicated Dad and supportive husband - even among my friends that have autistic kids - my husband is a Godly Gift. We are doing a lot better - I feel so encouraged and hopeful. I no longer feel guilty about my frustrations or anger - I now know it's a natural feeling and I know I have over come it. BUT I did feel guilty for having the initial feelings. If only I had met someone as truthful and honest - I thought I was going mad with my thoughts and reactions to my son's diagnosis. Now my son is 6 years old. He is high functional - there is still a long journey ahead. This book has made me even more determined to seek more help. I've had the opportunity to meet Renee Randazzo, (Tony's sister in the book)- she works at a center helping children get services for their special needs. She took her family's journey to help others. I APPLAUD Renee's work and her mom's determination to see through this whole ordeal. I wish I could meet Mary Callahan in person and let her know that I was encouraged and determined to also fight for my son, Cristian. This is a great book for someone who has had a diagnosis in their family. Years later - therapies and treatment change to the better - but initial feelings are just as real and painful. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR WRITING YOUR STORY!!!!!!

Did she slap the kid one time that I read in the book...yes. Was it wrong...yes. Should they have worked on a better marriage and environment for the kids...yes. Should their kids be taken away because they could not afford to live in a better neighborhood...no. The saying "People in glass houses should not throw stones" comes to mind. It is always the self-righteous who fall the hardest. This book explores through a very human story the nature of autism and its

destructiveness. I only wish more folks knew of it. It reminds us of the importance of at least ruling in or out allergies and the need for biomedical and/or dietary intervention to assist in recovery, be it full or partial, and hope, be it full or partial, for a group of children that society, and sadly, often doctors, don't really understand and refrain from helping...not so much from a place of spite as a place of fear. Whether the autism or the root cause of it in Tony's case affects you and yours, his story is likely relevant, moreso some 20 years after it was written. I just wish there was a sequel.

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