



Commonsense Rebellion: Taking Back Your Life from Drugs, Shrinks, Corporations, and a World Gone Crazy

By Bruce E. Levine

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In recent years the mental health industry has been attacked for the invalidity of its illnesses, the unreliability of its diagnoses, the dangers of its treatments, and its corruption by drug companies. Commonsense Rebellion integrates those critiques and goes further. Nearly 1 in 4 American adults take psychiatric drugs, and Ritalin production has increased 800 percent since 1990. Yet the mental health industry laments the fact that two-thirds of us with diagnosable mental disorders do not seek treatment. This book argues that "institutional mental health's" ever-increasing diseases, disorders, and drugs have diverted us from examining an important rebellion against an increasingly impersonal and coercive "institutional society" which worships speed, power, and technology. This has created fantastic wealth - at least for some - but its disregard for human autonomy, community, and diversity has come with a cost. Depression has reportedly increased tenfold since 1900, and suicide levels for teenage boys have tripled since 1960. Have human genetics and serotonin levels changed that much, or has society?

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In this jeremiad about the mental health industry, society more than psychiatry takes the brunt of Levine's criticism. He cites psychiatric critics Thomas Szasz and Peter Breggin in support of his opposition to overdiagnosis, medication, and excessive psychiatric influence. Yet a large proportion of the mental health establishment would agree with his indictment of TV, guns, alcohol and tobacco, gambling, overeating, advertising, mass education, managed care, Viagra, prisons, and employment trends. Well read, thoughtful, and idealistic, Levine wants to humanize science and technology, not abolish them. But he goes overboard at times, exaggerating the evils of psychiatry, itself a divided profession (see J. Allan Hobson's *Out of Its Mind*, LJ 6/15/01). He thus blights his own argument, as when he argues that "the behavior modifiers have today taken over culture as totally as the Nazis had once taken over Europe." The book merits attention despite these faults and belongs in most libraries in a category bridging social criticism and self-help. E. James Lieberman, George Washington Univ. Sch. of Medicine, Washington, DC

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Review

"Levine looks at all these new disease manifestations from a common sense perspective....And this perspective tells us that we must redeem our autonomy, community, and humanity before we can overcome our growing unhappiness, anxiety, depression, and craziness." —Stanton Peele Book of the Month Selection for Stanton's Bookstores

"It is always refreshing to find someone who stands at the edge of his profession and dissects its failures with a critical eye, refusing to be deceived by its pretensions. Bruce Levine condemns the cold, technocratic approach to mental health and, to our benefit, looks for deeper solutions." —Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*

"An entertaining, hard-hitting, and controversial book about contemporary culture....Full of astonishing statistics, the book covers a wide range of topics: attention deficit disorder, chemical dependency, depression, education, health care, consumerism, the online environment, and more....Aptly titled, this book is an opinionated wake-up call." —Choice

"This book is life saving and, if taken to heart, life changing." —Florida Times-Union

mention (*Z Magazine*)

Title mention in an article by Bruce E. Levine in the ***Ecologist*, October 2007**

About the Author

Bruce E. Levine, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in private practice for more than fifteen years, is on the advisory council of the International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology, which fights against the drugs, electroshocks, and other abuses of institutional mental health. He lives in Cincinnati, OH

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