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It's Hard Being You: A Primer on Being Happy Anyway

By Sharon Emery

Foreword by former New Orleans Saints player Steve Gleason

Author photo and book cover available for downloading at www.sharon-emery.com

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Surviving life when it's hard being you

Author offers path to being happy anyway

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. – Sharon Emery struggled with the losses and limits she faced but couldn't change – no matter how hard she tried.

And she *did* try. First with her incurable severe stutter, then with the death of her daughter, Jessica, and the too-early deaths of her own younger siblings. Meanwhile, her “broken” voice meant her long career in communications was regularly a battle.

Emery, who lives near Lansing, wrote this memoir – *It's Hard Being You: A Primer on Being Happy Anyway* – to help guide her children on their own life journeys, stressing the amazing resilience of humans beings.

Exhibit A: herself.

In the foreword, former NFL player Steve Gleason – a friend of Emery's son, Ben Schneider, front man for the band Lord Huron – provides a compelling introduction to what we can gain from what we lose.

Gleason played six seasons with the New Orleans Saints and famously blocked a punt in the first home game after Hurricane Katrina, which became a symbol of rebirth for the city. He has lived with ALS for more than 10 years and, through the Team Gleason foundation, is a leading advocate for people with the debilitating disease that has no cure.

As for Emery, she was a mother, sister, and daughter – and lost all those roles. She was a journalist, public relations consultant, and teacher – and never able to speak fluently.

Her memoir recounts Emery's challenges and achievements, tracing her efforts to give them meaning and find where they fit in her life. It's a process she considers vital to surviving what happens to you – telling the story. And hers is a story she wants her adult children, and readers, to know.

That story includes an unflinching journey through her grief in the drowning death of her oldest child, who was developmentally delayed and cognitively impaired. But it also reveals how she survived, and survived well, in the face of such loss.

As Ron Fournier, journalist and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Love That Boy*, noted in his endorsement, “Her memoir packs more inspiration than heartbreak, a solace to anybody coping with life or death, which is all of us.”

Emery recounts how Gleason has influenced her thinking on which disabling conditions she would be willing to live with – or not. And she poses challenging questions about what we value in our children, in the context of genetic testing, a subject she pursued as at Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan.

And she encourages her readers to embrace people with disabilities, offering practical advice on how to do that. Stuttering is a key focus, and Emery's observations about the reactions of fluent speakers to stutters are illuminating. The title of [her TEDx Talk](#), “The Disabled Listener,” signals just who she thinks needs to improve their communication skills.

A chapter on how to fight with your spouse and make sure no one loses, because then the relationship loses, is aimed at ensuring her children can provide the glue to help keep their own intimate partnerships intact.

It's Hard Being You is a reaffirming example of surviving your life – and not only living to tell the story, but thriving in a way that allows you to share what you learned along the way.

Lori Nelson Spielman, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Life List*, described it succinctly: “Emery's book is a gift to the world.”

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It's Hard Being You: A Primer on Being Happy Anyway is available at select bookstores and on Amazon.com.

More information is at www.sharon-emery.com.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Sharon Emery lives with her husband, former Lansing State Journal columnist John Schneider, on 12 acres near Lansing. She was raised in Roseville, Mich., near Detroit, and received her B.A. from Wayne State University. She has an M.S. from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and was a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan. Her long career in communications includes more than 20 years in journalism, including editing at the Capital Bureau of Booth Newspapers (now Mlive); teaching journalism for nearly a decade at Michigan State University as an assistant instructor; and serving as vice president at the public relations firm TruscottRossman. This is her first book.