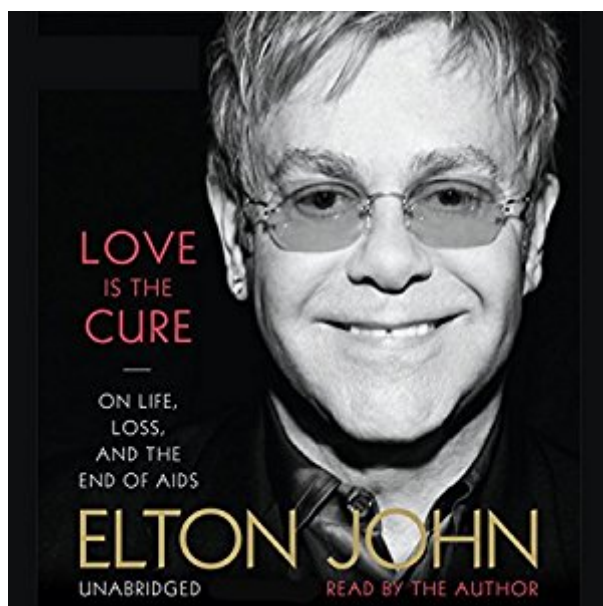


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Love Is The Cure: On Life, Loss, And The End Of AIDS



Synopsis

Audie Award Nominee, Nonfiction, 2013 In the 1980s, Elton John saw friend after friend, loved one after loved one, perish needlessly from AIDS. In the midst of the plague, he befriended Ryan White, a young Indiana boy ostracized by his town and his school because of the HIV infection he had contracted from a blood transfusion. Ryan's inspiring life and devastating death led Elton to two realizations: His own life was a mess. And he had to do something to help stop the AIDS crisis. Since then, Elton has dedicated himself to overcoming the plague and the stigma of AIDS. He has done this through the Elton John AIDS Foundation, which has raised and donated \$275 million to date to fighting the disease worldwide. *Love Is the Cure* is Elton's personal account of his life during the AIDS epidemic, including stories of his close friendships with Ryan White, Freddie Mercury, Princess Diana, Elizabeth Taylor, and others, and the story of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. With powerful conviction and emotional force, Elton conveys the personal toll AIDS has taken on his life - and his infinite determination to stop its spread. Elton writes, "This is a disease that must be cured not by a miraculous vaccine, but by changing hearts and minds, and through a collective effort to break down social barriers and to build bridges of compassion. Why are we not doing more? This is a question I have thought deeply about, and wish to answer - and help to change - by writing this book." Sales of *Love Is the Cure* benefit the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Book Information

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Celebrities

Customer Reviews

If you want a book about Elton's life, with all the gossip, the music, the costumes, the flowers, the feathers, the tiaras, the tantrums, the ups, and the downs, not to mention his genius, you will have to look elsewhere. This book is not for you. But if you are interested in Elton's charitable endeavors, or the AIDS epidemic, or the social and health issues that face humanity, or if you would like to support the Elton John AIDS Foundation, you should buy this book (proceeds from which benefit the EJAF) and read it. Elton John should be commended for making his first book not a self-congratulatory autobiography but a plea for help in his chief passion, the fight against AIDS. Yes, *Love is the Cure* contains many autobiographical elements. Elton explains how his young friend, AIDS victim and activist Ryan White, unwittingly placed the musician on the path to recovery from life-threatening multiple addictions. This, in turn, enabled Elton to do what he wishes he'd done sooner - become a volunteer, activist, and fundraiser extraordinaire to rid the world of AIDS and the mass suffering, social and economic disruption, and terrible deaths it causes. We read how Elton took many valuable lessons from his own experiences - before, during and after rehab - and applied them to his work against AIDS. For example, through his leadership, the EJAF has been very aggressive in reaching out to marginalized populations, including not just men who have sex with men, but sex workers, intravenous drug users, prison inmates, and the desperately poor, in countries around the globe. EJAF monies are funneled to local organizations in such diverse places as South Africa and Ukraine designed to meet very specific needs. The epidemic of rape against women in South Africa and homophobia in Ukraine are the stuff of outrage, but, as Elton points out, so are politicians and religious leaders in the U.S. who stand in the way of sex education and clean needle exchanges, as well as adequate funding for local AIDS programs that could reach the most vulnerable people. Elton fervently believes that, given the medical advances that have been made in the treatment of AIDS, if only governments, private companies, nonprofits, and individuals could shed their prejudices and shortsightedness, and do their fair share, we could see the end of AIDS in the foreseeable future. In other words, it's the lack of commitment to eradication of the disease rather than an inability to do what is necessary that is now the chief obstacle in the fight against AIDS. *Love is the Cure* is eye-opening and inspiring.

Life, Loss and the End of Aids. For those like me who watched countless die during the 80's we never dreamed of ending Aids; only surviving. Elton John shares a powerful message. It's never too late to add your voice. Elton John reserves a significant dose of blame for himself for not using his celebrity and considerable resources earlier. While also placing much deserved blame with politicians like Ronald Reagan and religious figures like Jerry Falwell. I

lived in Washington DC in the 80's, I remember. Elton John's outrage of a community that turned their backs on a young Ryan White is something we must never forget. Treating people with AIDS, as with any disease; humanely. A wonderful, inspiring read.

Sir Elton John's life has been interesting and varied enough that he could easily have found a lot to write about in his first book. He's been a mainstay of the pop charts for four decades. His flamboyant lifestyle has been fodder for tabloids and mainstream media alike. He has moved in elevated circles, both in his native England, where he was friends with Princess Diana, and in the US, which he regards as a second home. He has played Madison Square Gardens more than any other performer, and he has the biggest-selling single of all time according to the Guinness Book of Records. Instead, he chose to shine the spotlight on the current state of the AIDS crisis. By his own admission, he remained on the sidelines for far too long in the disease's early years. He was consumed by his own personal issues: addictions to drugs, alcohol and food. He learned about Ryan White, the young boy who became the most visible face of AIDS in the 1980s, the same way everyone else did: through a cover article in People magazine he read in a doctor's waiting room. He became incensed at the way the boy, who was infected by a contaminated drug used to treat his hemophilia, was treated by his community. He reached out to the family and supported them emotionally for the duration of Ryan's short life. Ryan's upbeat attitude caused the musician to reevaluate his life. Before he could help anyone else, he had to get clean, which he did in the late eighties. It's not as if the crisis hadn't touched his life before then. He knew many people who were infected and died of AIDS. He needed a kick in the rear, and he got it. In 1992, he created the Elton John Aids Foundation (EJAF) and for the past two decades he's been at the forefront of the fund-raising effort to sponsor charities around the globe. The book's subtitle is "On Life, Loss, and the End of AIDS." Its emphasis, though, is primarily on the third component: ending AIDS, a goal that he feels is attainable except for one factor. The disease's main victims are homosexuals, drug users and prison inmates--not a group that attracts much sympathy from the general populace. This is true in America, but the situation is even worse in other countries, where homosexuality is illegal. The musician hands out blame and credit in equal measure. He reserves a significant dose of blame for himself for not using his celebrity, connection and considerable resources earlier. However, he directly blames politicians like Ronald Reagan, religious figures like Jerry Falwell, and political leaders in other nations, such as the Ukraine and South Africa for being responsible for hundreds of thousands--if not millions--of deaths because of their policies and proclamations. On the other hand, he mentions unlikely allies, people like Senator Orrin Hatch and former President

George W. Bush, with whom he shares almost no political views but who both stood up on behalf of AIDS victims and encouraged the government to open its coffers and fund research, treatment and education programs. Credit where credit is due, he seems to say. He doesn't have to agree with every politician's policies to find common ground on this one important subject. The EJAF made an important decision from the beginning. Rather than duplicating the efforts of existing organizations, they would concentrate their efforts on fundraising and on making sure the money ended up where it could make the most impact. This kept their overhead down and made use of existing infrastructures. The US branch handles North America and the Caribbean, while the British branch covers most of the rest of the world. In his book Elton John discusses some of the programs they have supported and why they've been so important and effective. He sees AIDS as a disease that could be essentially eradicated. Current drug therapy has turned AIDS from a death sentence into a disease that people can live long lives with. The drug regimen not only reduces the symptoms in patients, it reduces the chance that it will be transmitted. With increased funding worldwide that amounts to the rounding error of the US national budget, AIDS patients could be treated globally. However, that will never happen so long as the disease's primary victims are stigmatized. That is the essence of his thesis: that love is the cure. Treating people with AIDS--or those at greatest risk of being infected--humanely. His message is inspirational and it's not a pie-in-the-sky hope. His foundation's successes demonstrate that the approach can be effective.

Elton John aims to the heart of each reader by speaking from his heart. He presents facts that cover the history of a tragic virus. His compassion for Ryan White comes through loud and clear. White's life really affected Elton who went through a personal rediscovery via rehabilitation and looking at life differently. He felt the need to step up and advocate for aids sufferers and in pointing a way to end the disease. Love is indeed the cure, as a nation must come to use compassion for all aids victims. It really is that simple, by using love and compassion the disease/virus will be defeated. It is hard to believe that having written such a compelling book, Elton still relies on Bernie Taupin to write Elton's song lyrics because the book is the greatest song Elton has ever written. This book should be used in every High School English classroom; it is that important. And Elton deserves a hug from everyone of us for delivering his compassion.

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