

## Braided Cord Tough Times In and Out



Liz Kulp, was diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) as a young teen. Knowing her challenges and understanding her strengths helped her graduate from public high school and strive to move on to independent adulthood like her peers. But, she soon learned that life within the context of a family that understood and helped her gain the desire for independence had not prepared her to live in a world filled with predators and abstract thinking. Liz unashamedly lets readers inside the hidden world of adult transition for many of our young people with FASD. It is a story you will not soon forget. Short Excerpt from Liz: I was born an addict and ever since I was tiny I have overdone, overlooked or overwhelmed myself. I was born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, otherwise known as FASD. That means my mom drank while I was trying to grow in her stomach and because of her drinking some of my parts got mixed up and didnt grow too well. My differences are hidden and thats a real pain, because it is easy to judge a person by what you see. The most difficult parts of my life are caused from my brain, which was probably the most affected. I have trouble learning new things and I live in a world that is louder, softer, harder, scratchier, noisier, shakier, slippery and more chaotic than most of the people reading this. I want you to imagine what it is like to feel the seams of your socks, the label on your clothes, the flicker of fluorescent lights, the mumblings and rumblings of every noise around you, and then try to learn new things. Overwhelming. Yes, that is what it is often for me. Liz Kulp, once again opens the closed doors many families face daily loving human beings with complex neurological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral damage. Beaten. Made fun of and shunned. Kicked and contained, Liz puts a face on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) for the tens of thousands

of US babies born each year. Liz adds reality to the adult lives of hundreds of thousands of adults who spend their lives in prisons, institutions or life on the street. She exposes what can happen once childhood is over. Anna (Liz's heart sister) The process of producing Braided Cord, Tough Times In and Out has been a work in progress for Liz for over eight years. Reliving this through her words written in journals, poetry, rhymes and raps in addition to reviewing old medical files and correspondences has been very painful, but birth does not happen without pain. Her journey and the editing of this manuscript has touched me to the depths of my core self and brought me piercing heartache. No mother in the world who loves her child would ever want her or him to walk Liz's journey. And yet Liz's nightmare story is repeated family-to-family quietly hidden behind closed doors. Our family has chosen to reveal this pain to allow for new growth of programming and strategies to enhance the lives of our citizens with FASDs. We hope through our work as a family our actions speak, however messy, louder than our words. Her truth and experiences, whether we agree with how the reality played out, are hers without our filters. Jodee Kulp

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