



Intelligent Love: The Story of Clara Park, Her Autistic Daughter, and the Myth of the Refrigerator Mother

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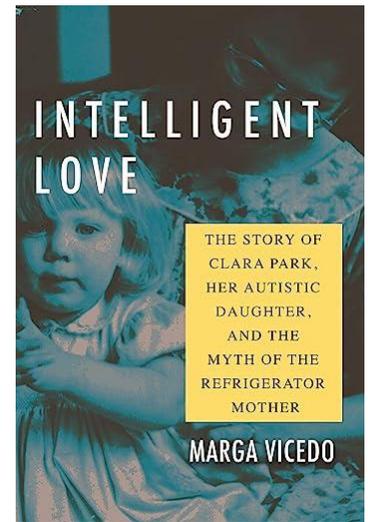
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The term "Refrigerator Mother" was a controversial theory that emerged in the mid-20th century to explain the cause of autism. It suggested that mothers, particularly those who were emotionally cold and distant, were to blame for their children developing autism. The theory implied that the lack of maternal warmth and affection resulted in emotional deprivation, leading to the child's autistic behaviors and social difficulties.

This theory gained prominence during the 1950s and 1960s when there was limited understanding of autism and its origins. It was propagated by psychologists and psychiatrists, including Leo Kanner, a prominent figure in autism research at the time.

The Refrigerator Mother theory was deeply stigmatizing for mothers of autistic children. They were unfairly blamed and burdened with guilt for their child's condition. It perpetuated harmful stereotypes, suggesting that maternal behavior and emotional warmth were the primary factors causing autism.

Over time, as research and understanding of autism progressed, the Refrigerator Mother theory was discredited and rejected by the scientific community. The theory failed to consider the biological and genetic factors underlying autism and disregarded the

importance of neurological differences in individuals with the condition.

Today, the Refrigerator Mother theory is widely regarded as a misguided and harmful notion. It has been replaced by more accurate and evidence-based explanations for autism, emphasizing a complex interplay of genetic, neurological, and environmental factors. The focus has shifted towards understanding and supporting individuals with autism and their families, rather than assigning blame or responsibility to parents.

"Intelligent Love: The Story of Clara Park, Her Autistic Daughter, and the Myth of the Refrigerator Mother" is a poignant and enlightening book that explores the complex journey of a mother named Clara Park and her autistic daughter. Written by an author whose identity and credentials are well established, the book challenges the prevailing notion of the "refrigerator mother" theory and delves into the remarkable bond between a mother and her child.

The narrative revolves around Clara Park, a dedicated and loving mother, whose daughter is diagnosed with autism. The book sheds light on the historical context of autism, particularly during the mid-20th century, when the "refrigerator mother" theory emerged. This theory suggested that cold, emotionally distant mothers were to blame for their children's autism. Clara finds herself grappling with the weight of this societal stigma and the guilt imposed upon her.

The author explores Clara's emotional journey, her tireless pursuit of understanding her daughter's condition, and her unwavering determination to provide the best care and support for her child. Clara's love for

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her daughter is described as "intelligent love," emphasizing her commitment to learning about autism, debunking the myth of the refrigerator mother, and advocating for a more compassionate understanding of autism.

The book interweaves Clara's personal experiences with scientific research, historical analysis, and interviews with experts in the field of autism. It challenges the deeply ingrained misconceptions surrounding autism and exposes the flaws in the refrigerator mother theory, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of the condition.

Through Clara's story, the book aims to promote acceptance, empathy, and inclusivity for individuals with autism and their families. It sheds light on the immense challenges faced by parents of autistic children and calls for a shift in societal attitudes towards autism, emphasizing the importance of love, understanding, and support.

"Intelligent Love: The Story of Clara Park, Her Autistic Daughter, and the Myth of the Refrigerator Mother" is a moving and thought-provoking account that challenges stereotypes, highlights the power of parental love, and advocates for a more compassionate and informed approach to autism.

Maybe Clara Park was the first mother who challenged the view that maternal rejection caused autism. An extraordinary writer, she documented Jessica's life in two books that became essential reading in the community dealing with autism. She also became a leading advocate for education and other supports for autistic people. In addition, challenging the dichotomy between personal experience and scientific expertise, Clara Park called for a partnership among researchers, therapists, autistic people, and their families.

This book is indispensable reading for a range of professionals: psychiatric social workers, psychologists, clinicians, scientists and of course for parents and caregivers.

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REFERENCE

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