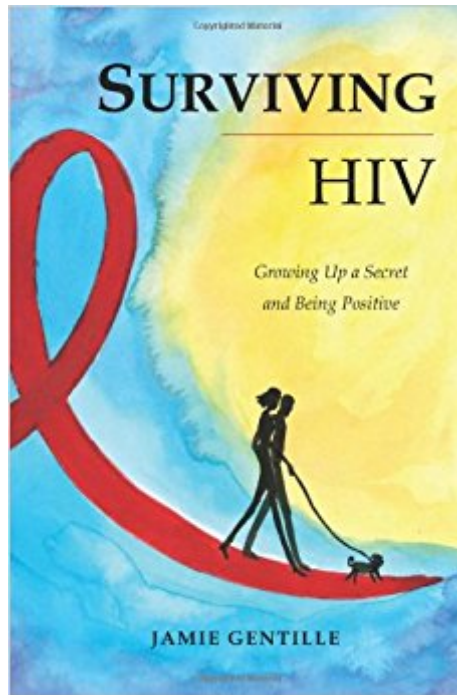


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# Surviving HIV: Growing Up A Secret And Being Positive



## Synopsis

Surviving HIV: Growing Up a Secret and Being Positive is the true story of Jamie Gentile, a girl in her 30s who defies the odds by living a healthy and productive life after contracting HIV during a blood transfusion at age 3 during open heart surgery. This book follows Jamie's life as a child, to whom the medical world was a second home, through adolescence and adulthood. Along the way she encounters pain, joy, adversity, despair, ignorance, and above all, hope. Her journey takes the reader through a time when HIV and AIDS was a highly stigmatized terminal disease, to groundbreaking hope in the form of medical advances, to an age of full life expectancy and near normalcy. The book's style is a playful balance between dry, self-deprecating humor, and raw emotion. She describes heartbreaking experiences as a child enduring painful medical procedures, and the terrifying reality of a terminal illness. The book poignantly describes Jamie's process of coming to terms with her own mortality at the age of 10. While the reader is moved by these sobering stories, they will also laugh at loud at Jamie's irreverent humor and light-hearted style. Interwoven throughout Surviving HIV is a theme of stark reality, and enduring optimism that can offer the reader a new perspective on their own lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I went to high school with Jamie. This is the first time I have heard and understood her entire story. I now know why she was so wonderfully strong and incredibly easy to be friends with. I always knew she was special and even though we lost touch over the years, I have often thought of her. I knew she had some sort of illness, but I had no idea what she went through to stay healthy. This book is a perfect example of how little we really know about the people around us and it is a true testament to

the pure strength that the human spirit can have! I am truly inspired by Jamie and am lucky to have had her touch my life in a way that she may never fully understand. [Thank you and call me! ;-)] I plan to read this book to my son as he grows up so that he may have a better understanding of the world around him and learn that people may not always be what they seem. I feel like Jamie's words are written with great courage and will leave any reader with a greater sense of compassion and understanding for anyone they meet!

I read this book in less than a day. It was very encouraging, funny, and thought-provoking. The author shares how she was supported by family, medical professionals, camp, and support organizations in growing up with a heart condition and HIV. She experienced confusing, painful, and difficult experiences as a result but maintains a sense of humor, support, and love through the cushioning effect of her support system and her resilient attitude. I loved her description of how she gained support through camp and the Pediatric AIDS Foundation and how she navigated talking about HIV with boyfriends and her husband. It is also a great perspective on how children with chronic illnesses or who experience medical procedures see the confusing medical world into which they are thrust. As a former child patient, she has great insight and resources for her patients at the hospital in her role as a child life specialist. (I love child life specialists!) This book would be great insight for professionals working with children with chronic medical conditions, for parents of a child with a chronic illness, for anyone interested in children and women with HIV, and really most anyone. Bravo for such a touching, inspiring book!

The writer's hopeful and humorous tone adds such grace and light to the otherwise serious topic of pediatric HIV. An engaging, winsome, and worthwhile read.

I don't read a lot of nonfiction but I loved this book. Jamie tells her story so eloquently - it's light-hearted and heart wrenching at the same time and leaves you feeling hopeful and positive at the end. So happy I read this one :)

"Surviving HIV," is the smart, compelling, memoir of author Jamie Gentile's personal fight against HIV/AIDS. In a style all her own, Jamie captures the pain and struggles of learning she was HIV positive, and how humor, love, and persistence helped her overcome the odds and become the woman she is today. The book reads like Jamie is having a conversation with the reader, and her words do more than share her story -- they inspire us to do more, be more, and make more of

ourselves than what we have been told is possible. I've had the pleasure of working alongside Jamie in her HIV advocacy work for more than three years. There is never a day that I am not impressed by her courage and her commitment to using her own experiences to help those with similar stories. I think her readers will agree. Above all, "Surviving HIV" demonstrates courage, and how Jamie's own battle against the odds is now helping so many others conquer their own health struggles. Congratulations to Jamie. I know her story will continue to motivate, inspire, and educate so many others.

This is one of those books you can read in record time; you don't want to put it down. Jamie's honest and raw stories will make you laugh, cry, and change the way you look at life. Her ability to incorporate humor into her toughest moments makes you want to have her as a best friend. I loved every word!

The humorous approach to such a challenging life made the reading so enjoyable. The book is not only inspirational but also delightful! It also educates about HIV, congenital heart disease and living with chronic illness. I hope Jamie is working on Book 2!

I have read many HIV-infected personal stories. This one is really good. It does deal with a young woman infected through a blood transfusion, and her story. Good parents, income, ability to enroll in NIH clinical trials. Very different than most of the mid 20's and 30's folks that we currently deal with who became infected in what one might say is a "victim" way. She was able to cross the hurdle because her infection was through a blood transfusion. None the less, it is a very difficult barrier to cross and this young woman did it. I think that others can, but we live in a judgmental society, and I as a provider have to help people to come to their disclosure point when they can. Obviously before sex, but it is a very very difficult place to be, and I think that this was not highlighted very well. Thanks for the personal story, though. We need at least 200 more of these.

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