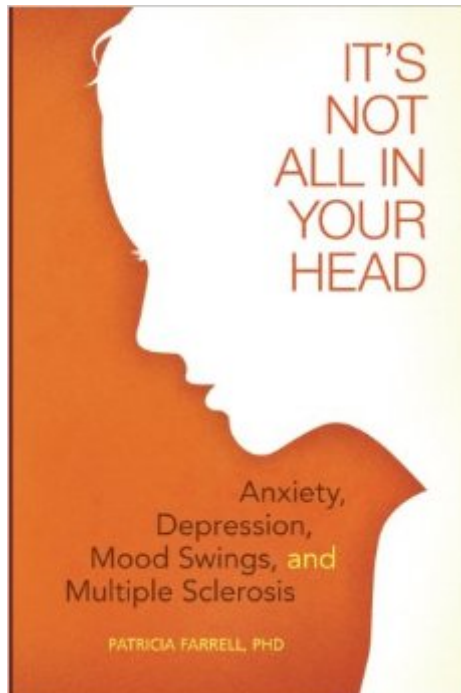


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# It's Not All In Your Head: "Anxiety, Depression, Mood Swings, And MS



## Synopsis

"One of the greatest challenges people face when dealing with an unpredictable disease such as Multiple Sclerosis is learning to overcome the psychological burden of not knowing what each day will bring. MS is a true roller coaster of emotions and dealing with these feelings is a critical issue for people living with the disease. According to WebMD, symptoms of depression severe enough to warrant medical intervention affect up to half of all people living with MS. It's Not All in Your Head is a cognitive-behavioral approach to overcoming the depression, anxiety, and stress that goes hand-in-hand with MS. Dr. Farrell helps individuals and their families develop a better understanding of the effects that MS has on mood levels and anxiety and offers a plan of simple remediation in a self-help format. It's Not All in Your Head shows that: MS patients' depression and anxiety can be related to their medical condition Exercise can promote growth in brain connections and help alleviate depression Pain severity in MS can be lessened through stemming anxiety Social involvement is key to maintaining mental and physical health"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an excellent book, whether or not you have MS or have a loved one with MS. I admit, if I hadn't already been a fan of Dr. Farrell's first book, "How to Be Your Own Therapist," I might not have read this book because of the title. Yes, you will learn a great deal more about MS, follow some interesting personal stories, and find portions that are just directed toward people with this disease. But you will also learn more about yourself, especially if you have any sort of chronic illness or

condition. As a person with chronic illness and chronic pain myself, I found this book to be a blessing! Dr. Farrell calls anxiety and depression the "ugly twins" and she is absolutely right on target. Almost anyone (chronic condition or not) could benefit from reading this chapter. She also has self-help techniques, coping strategies, how to handle guilt, and an entire chapter devoted to improving memory. Each chapter ends with further reading options for you to delve deeper if you so desire. Don't miss the "Quality of Life" questionnaire in the back, along with the exercise chart. The possible protective and healing qualities of exercise are explored in this book, too. That's another reason that I think it's unfair to just think of this book as only helpful for folks with MS. People who do have MS will find the larger font size (compared to a typical paperback) and good contrast provides ease of reading if you have visual challenges. The larger book size is also easier to hold and handle. Although the text cites many scholarly studies, Dr. Farrell breaks them down into bite size nuggets and helps clarify and illuminate them so it's not dry or intimidating.

Saying that there is something for everyone in this book is not just a title for a book review, it is really an important point. That's because MS is such a variable disease, so what might work for one person may not mean anything to another. As a result, if you happen to be a person living with MS, it is very easy to feel like no one at all understands you- each experience is so unique. HOWEVER, this book includes many different profiles of individuals at different ages, who have different severities of disease, different lifestyles etc. It covers many different aspects of people living with MS, including the real life negatives and some very inspirational positives. It is relatable if you yourself are living specifically with MS, and probably if you happen to be living with many other chronic illnesses. It does NOT candy-coat the difficulties, especially at various times during the illness. Rather, it presents the individuals who are dealt these life-changing issues and describes their struggles and triumphs, in the ever changing face of MS. The real people described in the book are relatable, helping people living with MS feel validated and understood. Another important aspect of this book is it really is a reference guide as well, providing practical and easy to use tools to help anyone living with a chronic illness and the anxiety, depression and mood swings that often accompany them. There are several tools to help people evaluate their status and plan strategies to compensate for the effects and loss associated with their condition. I have found it difficult to explain the cognitive problems I have due to MS...many people think I just forget where I put my keys, and try to be good intentioned by saying they do that too.

I will tell you right up front that this book is necessary reading for a person with MS (PwMS), their

caregivers, spouses or partners. My forceful recommendation is based on the fact that I was diagnosed with primary-progressive multiple sclerosis (PPMS) twenty-two years ago and have been researching this disease since my diagnosis. I was quite sure that I am very familiar with the past and current research until I read "It's Not All in Your Head." Although I noticed research papers on depression and MS over the years I did not pay much attention to depression because I thought the research papers on depression were related to PwMS not being able to adjust to their new disease related disabilities. And much to my surprise Dr. Farrell opened my eyes with her revealing book. Over the years of my research I adopted many strategies to manage my PPMS and was delighted that Dr. Farrell confirms these strategies. For example: 1. The Resilience-Building Behaviors on page 42 is of paramount importance, in my opinion, whether one has depression or not, because it will enhance one's positive attitude as a management tool and also mentioned on page 197. A positive attitude is a must, no question about it. 2. Dr. Farrell hit the nail on the head when it comes to exercise, and obviously whether you MS or not, but it is mandatory for PwMS to exercise on a regular schedule, i.e., no excuses are allowed. I agree with her assessment that exercise can regulate the immune system because it "rewires the brain." 3. Dr. Farrell's sage advice on being your own advocate is right on. Naturally, it requires effort on one's part, but it will enhance your well being, it will put you in charge. You must acquire knowledge regarding MS. as Dr. Farrell states, "knowledge is power."

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