



My Friend Leonard

By James Frey

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Perhaps the most unconventional and literally breathtaking father-son story you'll ever read, **My Friend Leonard** pulls you immediately and deeply into a relationship as unusual as it is inspiring.

The father figure is Leonard, the high-living, recovering coke addict "West Coast Director of a large Italian-American finance firm" (read: mobster) who helped to keep James Frey clean in **A Million Little Pieces**. The son is, of course, James, damaged perhaps beyond repair by years of crack and alcohol addiction—and by more than a few cruel tricks of fate.

James embarks on his post-rehab existence in Chicago emotionally devastated, broke, and afraid to get close to other people. But then Leonard comes back into his life, and everything changes. Leonard offers his "son" lucrative—if illegal and slightly dangerous—employment. He teaches James to enjoy life, sober, for the first time. He instructs him in the art of "living boldly," pushes him to pursue his passion for writing, and provides a watchful and supportive veil of protection under which James can get his life together. Both Leonard's and James's careers flourish...but then Leonard vanishes. When the reasons behind his mysterious absence are revealed, the book opens up in unexpected emotional ways.

My Friend Leonard showcases a brilliant and energetic young writer rising to important new challenges—displaying surprising warmth, humor, and maturity—without losing his intensity. This book proves that one of the most provocative literary voices of his generation is also one of the most emphatically human.

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My Friend Leonard By James Frey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #487228 in Books
- Brand: Riverhead Hardcover
- Published on: 2005-06
- Released on: 2005-06-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 1.17" h x 6.74" w x 9.42" l, 1.26 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 368 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In the bold and heartbreaking *My Friend Leonard*, James Frey picks up the story of his extraordinary life pretty much where things left off in his breakout bestseller and Amazon.com Best Book of 2003, *A Million Little Pieces*, the fierce, in-your-face memoir about Frey's kamikaze run of self-destruction and his days in rehab. Fresh from a stint in jail from pre-rehab-related charges ("On my first day in jail, a three hundred pound man named Porterhouse hit me in the back of the head with a metal tray."), clean-living Frey returns to Chicago and gets sucker-punched with a cruel blow that will leave readers ducking for cover in anticipation of the blinding bender that's sure to come. But then the titular Leonard, the larger-than-life Vegas mobster ("West Coast Director of a large Italian finance firm") whom James befriended in rehab, steps into the story and serves equal parts unlikely life coach, guardian angel, and father figure for the grief-stricken author, adopting him as his "son" and schooling him in the fine art of "living boldly":

Be not bold, be f-cking BOLD. Every time you meet someone, make a f-cking impression. Make them think you're the hottest shit in the world. Make them think they're gonna lose their job if they don't give you one. Look 'em in the eye, and never look away. Be confident and calm, be f-cking bold.

Hurricane Leonard storms into James's life, showering his young charge with multi-course feasts at steakhouses and Italian restaurants, courtside seats at Bulls' games, Cuban cigars, and an elaborate Super Bowl party in Los Angeles, all the while doling out wisdom on life and love and motivating James to stick to his burgeoning writing career. James even has a brief stint as an employee of Leonard's, though occupational hazards--like having a nine millimeter shoved in his face--prove too much for the novice bag man (though he does make enough to invest his earnings in a Picasso drawing). When Leonard drops out of sight for an extended period, his absence leaves readers aching to hear the familiar refrain of "My Son!" just one more time.

Frey sticks to the taut, staccato style that shot through *A Million Little Pieces* with such raw electricity. Surprisingly, the tone feels equally at home with this book's focus on friendship and extreme loyalty, and works to intensify the always-looming, adrenaline-rush threat of violence and the lure of the Fury that courses like a riptide throughout the book. Ultimately, it's a sense of hope, and humor even, that prevails and makes *My Friend Leonard* a stand-alone success. Despite his shady pedigree, you'll long to have a friend like Leonard just a phone call away. --Brad Thomas Parsons

James Frey's List of Books You Should Read



Paris Spleen



Tropic of Cancer



The Great Santini

See more recommendations from James Frey



Amazon.com's Significant Seven

James Frey graciously agreed to answer the questions we like to ask every author: the Amazon.com Significant Seven.

Q: What book has had the most significant impact on your life?

A: *Tao te Ching* by Lao Tsu. Completely changed how I think, behave, live my life. Nothing else comes close.

Q: You are stranded on a desert island with only one book, one CD, and one DVD--what are they?

A: The book would be the *Tao te Ching*, the CD would be some compilation of love songs from the 70's and 80's, and the DVD would be highlights from the history of the Cleveland Browns.

Q: What is the worst lie you've ever told?

A: No way I can answer that.

Q: Describe the perfect writing environment.

A: I've been working at the same desk since I started writing. It's old and beaten-up and black. The rest of my workroom is empty, except for some crazy sh-- on the wall in front of me: pictures of people I admire, reproductions of artwork I dig, sayings that motivate me, things like--bare your soul, be bold, page a day motherfu--er page a day. I listen to music while I work, have a pile of nicotine gum and a couple cans of diet coke. My dogs are usually a couple feet away from me. I've always worked this way, probably always will.

Q: If you could write your own epitaph, what would it say?

A: "Loved, lost, laughed, left."

Q: Who is the one person living or dead that you would like to have dinner with?

A: Winston Churchill

Q: If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

A: Immortality.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Frey achieves another stylistic coup as he develops a narrative thread begun in 2003's *A Million Little Pieces*. He chronicles his journey out of the terrifying darkness of addiction, and the friend he meets along the way, Leonard. A gangster, raconteur and mentor, Leonard was introduced in *Pieces* as one of Frey's new rehab friends. Here, he pushes Frey out into the world, pampering him one moment, giving him tough love the next. As in *Pieces*, Frey's style throughout is loose, untraditional yet perfectly crafted: "[Leonard] offered me his hand and said good, I'm fucked up too, and I like fucked-up people, let's sit and eat and see if we can be friends. I took his hand and I shook it and we sat down and we ate together and we became friends." There's something mesmerizing about the endless tumble of words, the nonstop spilling out of Frey's troubles and triumphs. In the hands of a less capable writer, all of this cool, tight narration might numb the reader and distance the experience. Instead, this book packs a full-body emotional wallop. Frey's eye is keen for detail: the inside of a county lockup; the flat, gray Chicago winter; an out-of-control Super

Bowl party in Los Angeles; the grind of living day to day—all come alive in his sparse, powerful prose. At its core, this is an examination of a friendship. Frey's extraordinary relationship with Leonard is alive, a flesh-and-blood bond forged in the agony of rehab and sustained through honesty and trust. *Agent, Kassie Evashevski at Brillstein/Grey Entertainment. (June)*

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Frey's first memoir, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003), chronicled his stint in rehab at age 23 after years of drug and alcohol addiction. That struggle continues in his follow-up, which opens at the end of Frey's three-month jail sentence. Upon release, Frey was hopeful: he was headed to Chicago to join the woman he fell in love with in rehab, Lilly, and start a new life. But devastating news awaited him in Chicago, and Frey found himself tempted to march into the nearest bar. He bought a bottle of cheap wine, which he managed not to open, and turned to his friend Leonard, a charming, gentlemanly mobster whom Frey met in rehab. Leonard thought of Frey as his son and was willing to do anything to help him. Leonard gave Frey a questionable but lucrative job delivering packages, and encouraged and bolstered Frey, until a personal secret caused Leonard to withdraw from his friends and associates. Never one to mince words, Frey lays bare even his most private and personal musings, making this a raw, often visceral, reading experience. With Frey's emotions so close to the surface, it's impossible not to care about Frey's struggles to reintegrate into society and prosper. Another powerful read from a talented, dynamic author. *Kristine Huntley*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brad Hawkes:

Do you one among people who can't read enjoyable if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This My Friend Leonard book is readable by simply you who hate those straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer regarding My Friend Leonard content conveys the thought easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different available as it. So , do you nonetheless thinking My Friend Leonard is not loveable to be your top checklist reading book?

Sheila Cyr:

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Anna Sanders:

The book untitled My Friend Leonard contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains her idea with easy means. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy

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Sandra Bland:

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