

# Sit Down Before Reading: At-A-Glance

*In the fall of 2021, alarmed by the increasing aggressiveness of his multiple sclerosis, Dave Bexfield of Albuquerque, NM, desperately scrambled for answers. After seven treatment failures, five clinical trials, and a hematopoietic stem cell transplant since his MS diagnosis in 2006, Bexfield—now wheelchair-bound and heavily reliant on daily caregiving after living with the disease for 17 years—made a stunning discovery: he had been misdiagnosed. It had been Lyme disease all along.*

*Angry and determined, the professional writer and former newspaper reporter turned his talents toward uncovering how such an error could have occurred. As the founder of ActiveMSers.org, one of the largest and longest-running MS communities in the world, he began researching, writing, and publishing Sit Down Before Reading in the spring of 2022 — releasing chapters in real time as the story unfolded. What began as a personal reckoning slowly evolved into something far larger: a 52-chapter opus that rewrites medicine, solving a cavalcade of medical mysteries including some that have stumped scientists for centuries.*



Dave Bexfield

## How to Read SDBR

*Sit Down Before Reading* is a lengthy and detailed book written over 30 months between the spring of 2022 through the fall of 2024, a combination of memoir and scientific discovery. (For perspective, the audio book alone takes 27 hours to listen to.) Because it was written in real time and published chapter by chapter, hypotheses evolved and changed as they got refined (or upended), so some earlier material wound up being either superfluous or not quite accurate.

Due to time constraints, readers may initially prefer to take in the essential highlights. Here are some recommendations listed in order from those requiring the most time commitment to the least.

- **Go for the full experience.** Starting from the beginning takes readers along with Dave as he travels down rabbit holes in search of answers for his cratering health. You'll see how he struggled working through problems, as his attempts to untangle towering mysteries repeatedly ran into snags. But those early missteps were critical to help him develop later theories.
- **Skip Parts I-III.** Although these parts provide essential background to why the Lyme epidemic started and how it grew unchecked (as well as the enormous challenges of living with a misdiagnosis and dealing with debilitating symptoms including psychosis), Part IV drops readers into the book when Dave's revelations heat up.
- **Jump directly to the river of discoveries.** Chapter 41 puts readers into Dave's shoes as he discovers some glaring research inconsistencies, leading him to unravel the entire theory behind autoimmune disease. This discovery subsequently spawns a series of breakthroughs.
- **Read the most explosive chapters.** Chapters 48 through 52 contain the most groundbreaking discoveries, with the concentration in Chapter 48 and Chapter 52, Parts 3-5.
- **Cherry-pick your chapters based on your interests.** For instance, if you are suffering from long Covid, Chapters 45 and 46 will be of most importance, along with the concluding Chapter 52, which contains treatment recommendations for all forms of Lyme. The online book is fully searchable by keywords, with an embedded search bar at the bottom of every page.
- **Read the 5-part final chapter.** Chapter 52: Are You Sitting Down? wraps it all up. Or just skim the one-page, minute-long *SDBR* summary "In Brief: The Stealth Lyme Epidemic."



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# I

**Part I (Chapters 1-9)** introduces readers to Dave's journey, detailing his initial diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and the challenges that he faced living with the condition for 17 years. It sets the stage for his quest to uncover the true cause of his symptoms. Highlights: an experimental **stem cell transplant** out of desperation (Ch 2), a **\$500k insurance fight** that makes *The New York Times* (Ch 3), spiraling disability that had him **planning his own funeral** (Ch 5), his terrifying descent into **psychosis** (Ch 6), a final Hail Mary to get answers for **unexplained UTIs** (Ch 7), being locked outdoors butt naked after taking Viagra (Ch 8), the shocking epiphany when he discovered he had been **misdiagnosed** (Ch 9).

# II

**Part II (Chapters 10-22)** delves into the horrifying realization that not only did he have Lyme disease, but that he also had lots of company. He explores the medical community's failures and the impact of misdiagnosis on his life and others. Highlights: delving into **missed signs** from years past (Ch 10), scrambling to avoid getting **committed to a mental institution** (Ch 11), coming to grips with being misdiagnosed (Ch 12-13), **predicting a Nobel** in his future (Ch 14), the **colossal failure** of diagnosing MS and Lyme (Ch 15-17), the revelatory recovery after **antibiotics** and physical therapy (Ch 18-19), the incessant **gaslighting** by doctors (Ch 21), the desperation to find anyone willing to treat him (Ch 22).

# III

**Part III (Chapters 23-35)** focuses on the growing evidence he's uncovered, highlighting the widespread issue of Lyme disease being routinely misdiagnosed, rampant testing issues, and the enormous struggle to find treatment. Highlights: a string of **highly suspicious diagnoses** (Ch 23), finally securing the services of a **Lyme literate doctor** (Ch 24), dismissive doctors and patients and a primer on the long-running Lyme Wars (Ch 25), MS rates track suspiciously closely with **tick-endemic regions** (Ch 28), a leading health institution tries to deny care (Ch 30), a professional actuary examines fuzzy math (Ch 31), a 1962 health conference exposes **blatant flaws in MS research** (Ch 32), an unexpected development as treatment doors open (Ch 33), doctors dismiss research that fingers **spirochetes** (Ch 34), a sea of **red flags** (Ch 35).

# IV

**Part IV (Chapter 36-52)** features a series of unbelievable twists and groundbreaking revelations as the memoir concludes. Everything finally crystallizes as answers to myriad medical mysteries tumble out, offering true hope for those suffering from chronic health conditions. Highlights: antibiotics prophetically aid many **chronic illnesses** (Ch 36), developing a new tenet for evaluating medical research (Ch 37), discovering **FDR's misdiagnosis** (Ch 37), tripping up the "**latitude gradient**" theory (Ch 38), falling into the scientific minutiae trap (Ch 39), case numbers that don't add up (Ch 41), the complete unraveling of the **theory of autoimmunity** (Ch 42, 44), the clouds shrouding mental illness begin to part (Ch 43), the **source of long Covid** is discovered (Ch 45-46), the controversial **debate about vaccinations** gets an answer (Ch 47), the cause of many **birth defects** is revealed (Ch 48), confirmation that **Lyme spreads sexually and in utero** (Ch 48), what's behind the genesis of countless chronic illnesses and **cancers** (Ch 48), the hidden river of support among scientists (Ch 49), the **rising rate of infection** among generations explained (Ch 49), a reckoning from sufferers is gathering (Ch 49), the development of the "**box out**" technique (Ch 50), predictions of the future (Ch 50), letting readers in on a **personal secret** (Ch 51), **autoantibodies** as a telltale marker (Ch 52 p1), the unexpected success of **carb-restrictive diets** (Ch 52 p2), the reason behind the stunning benefits of new **GLP-1 weight-loss drugs** (Ch 52 p2), **starving out the disease** with ketogenic diets and intermittent fasting (Ch 52 p3), the critical importance of iron and **manganese** (Ch 52 p3), the **fatal assumptions** in nutrition research (Ch 52 p3), revealing clues from superagers (Ch 52 p3), why eradicating Lyme is so hard (Ch 52 p4), self-experimentation with a Lyme Starvation Diet (Ch 52 p4-5), how doctors are curing Lyme (Ch 52 p5), paradoxical lucidity explained and what it means for **dementia** (Ch 52 p5), **sepsis** and a **final mic drop** (Ch 52 p5), a promise kept—and a dream that may be a prophecy (Ch 52 p5).



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