



# A Life in Psychiatry: Looking Out, Looking In

*Paul Garfinkel*

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## **A Life in Psychiatry: Looking Out, Looking In** Paul Garfinkel

When Dr. Paul Garfinkel started his career in psychiatry in the 1970s, psychoanalysis dominated the profession. Then the pendulum swung the other way. Psychoanalysis was discredited and drugs became the treatment of choice for mental illness. Throughout his career, Garfinkel has struggled to find a balance between these two poles, between compassion and human touch on one hand and the rigour of science and the prescribed drugs that have revolutionized psychiatry on the other. Though it was sometimes not popular, he held steadfast to his belief that medicines combined with psychotherapy are often better than either one alone.

In this deeply personal memoir, Garfinkel writes about his journey through a 40-year career and life devoted to the understanding, care, and advocacy of the mentally ill. He takes us through the many stages in his life, from his humble beginnings in Winnipeg as the son of Jewish immigrants, to his life as the first CEO of Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

With candour, Garfinkel gives us insights into the life of a psychiatrist and reveals the challenges facing many practitioners, including “burn out” and the intense pain they feel when a patient commits suicide. He probes some of the most controversial subjects in the profession, such as the outrageous sexual abuse of patients. He shares his thoughts on the qualities needed to be a good psychiatrist and a good leader. Garfinkel passionately urges his colleagues to speak out, support the patients, and work toward removing the stigma of mental illness, hopeful for the day when people with mental illness are treated like anyone else who is suffering and in pain.

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