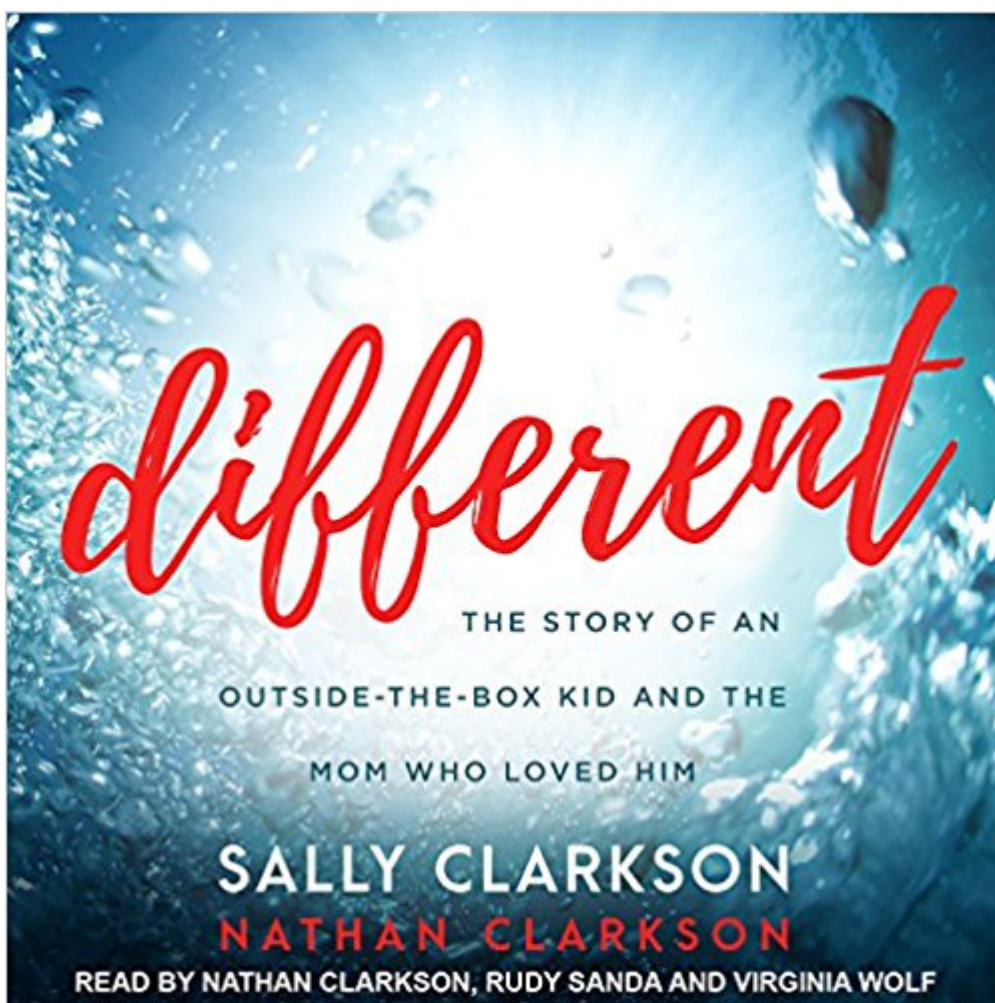


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# Different: The Story Of An Outside-the-Box Kid And The Mom Who Loved Him



## Synopsis

Nathan was different and Sally knew it. From his early childhood, Nathan was bursting with creativity and uncontrollable energy, struggling not only with learning issues but also with anxiety and OCD. He saw the world through his own unique lens—one that often caused him to be labeled as "bad," "troubled," or someone in need of "fixing." Bravely choosing to listen to her motherly intuition rather than the loud voices of the world, Sally dared to believe that Nathan's differences could be part of an intentional design from a loving Creator with a plan for his life. She trusted that the things that made him different were the very things that could make him great. Join Sally and Nathan as they share their stories from a personal perspective as mother and son. If you are in need of help and hope in your own journey with an outside-the-box child, or if you're an adult trying to make sense of your differences, you'll find deep insight, resonance, and encouragement in this book. Dare to love and nurture the "different" one in your life.

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## Customer Reviews

"Reading the unique perspectives of both mother and child is powerful. Moreover, the love that flows throughout this book makes even the most difficult experiences hope-filled and encouraging. I cannot recommend Different enough!" ---Shawna Wingert, author of Everyday Autism

Mental illnesses are not casserole diseases. Well-meaning folks don't show up on your porch with a covered dish and a shoulder to cry on when your child is struggling with mental illness. But you wish they would. With this book, Sally Clarkson offers weary moms the nourishing feast for

which they are starved. With equal parts empathy and wisdom, she breathes hope into the lives of parents who daily labor to lovingly raise outside-the-box children. Nathan grants us unprecedented, invaluable insight into the mind of the child as he grows. Sally assures us that though we will certainly be challenged, humbled, and humiliated, this story is not about us, but about being faithful to God to raise a uniquely challenged and challenging child. With warm understanding, she gives us tangible tools and healthy, hearty food for the journey. (Elizabeth Foss, Mother of nine, author of *Small Steps for Catholic Moms*) Sally has protected her family by keeping certain stories hidden from the public sphere until now. In *Different*, we are offered a vulnerable look behind the curtain into the story of a son with mental illness and a mother who fought to love well even when it felt impossible. The stories and truths in *Different* have not been shared before, and they will absolutely bring hope and freedom to those who struggle with their “different” children and think, I can’t do this; it’s just too hard. If you have an outside-the-box child, this is a must-read. (Sarah Mae, Coauthor of *Desperate: Hope for the Mom Who Needs to Breathe*) Raw and uplifting, this book is the assurance for weary moms everywhere: You don’t have to feel inadequate or alone anymore. We all long to see our outside-the-box children as blessings, but sometimes that feels impossible. This book gives us the grace to struggle through it. Thank you, Nathan and Sally. Both of you are brave and beautiful. (Sarah Mackenzie, Author of *Teaching from Rest* and creator of the Read-Aloud Revival) In *Different*, Sally Clarkson invited me to pursue God’s heart for my own outside-the-box child. Her seasoned and experienced words lifted this mama’s eyes off *What could be wrong with my child?* or *What could be wrong with me?* and on to Christ and all the possibilities of His beauty and power in the life of a person. This is a message for every parent’s heart. I recommend these pages both to those who feel like they have outside-the-box children and to those whose children color within the lines. (Sara Hagerty, Author of *Every Bitter Thing Is Sweet*) Sally’s and Nathan’s voices are needed in this day and age of parenting. This book was an encouragement for me on so many levels, as a mama, friend, and woman in ministry. Both Sally and Nathan display the love and grace of Jesus toward each other, and that is a message that transfers to people all over the world. (Jamie Ivey, Host of *The Happy Hour with Jamie Ivey* podcast) I have watched the ministries of Sally and Nathan over the years, and I’m thrilled to see how God has used a “different” boy to bless so many. This is a book of hope and inspiration told through the eyes of a mom who, like so many parents today, must deal with the day-to-day challenges of working with a unique and special child. (Dr. Scott Turansky, Cofounder of the National Center for Biblical Parenting) As a mother of two outside-the-box children, I found myself tearing up and

nodding my head in agreement as I read *Different*. In the end, I felt so very grateful for this book. Sally and Nathan are both vulnerable and real as they describe the day-to-day life of a “different” child. Reading the unique perspectives of both mother and child is powerful. Moreover, the love that flows throughout this book makes even the most difficult experiences hope-filled and encouraging. I cannot recommend *Different* enough! (Shawna Wingert, Author of *Everyday Autism* and *Special Education at Home*) For decades, Sally Clarkson has been a strong, wise guide for families. In *Different*, she is more vulnerable than ever before, recording a memoir of moving through a refining experience and sharing her notes from the journey. She and her son Nathan recount this ongoing struggle with faith-affirming honesty, offering insight and hope for families who face similarly bewildering battles. An at-times-painful story, *Different* is honest about Sally’s and Nathan’s progress without ending in a neat and tidy total victory. Instead, the book invites us into a faithful, resolved embrace of the story God is weaving even through the most painful and perplexing of our weaknesses. (S. D. Smith, Author of *The Green Ember*) --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

This book gives insight into the mind of a child who is struggling with mental illnesses, and also the thoughts of the mom who had to learn how to raise him. While my children don’t have ADD, ODD or OCD, they are certainly different. I appreciated seeing how it is possible to love my kids \*because\* of their differences. Seeing the impact Sally’s love, patience and prayers had on her son, Nathan, is making a huge difference in how I parent my kids. Each chapter starts with Nathan’s story, and then Sally responds with how she dealt with that particular incident, or how she was able to learn how to guide him through his struggles. If you have a child who has a mental disorder, or even just a difficult or different child, this book will give you a fresh look at how to relate, communicate, and love your child through the difficulties of childhood and adolescence.

Encouraging and inspiring, this story of a mother’s struggle to help her son is truly unique. Told by both Nathan and Sally Clarkson, we get a fresh perspective on what perseverance and love look like in the midst of a struggle.

It didn’t take Sally and Clay Clarkson long to determine that their youngest son Nathan was “different.” He struggled to follow instructions; couldn’t sit quietly for more than a few minutes; he had a hard time sleeping and he was often agitated. In time, he was diagnosed with ADHD, OCD and ODD. These are significant

challenges that make it difficult for a person to function. Nathan was also struggling. He didn't understand why he couldn't sleep or focus. It was like his mind was constantly changing channels and not allowing him to stay on task. Sally and Clay were committed to finding ways to help Nathan navigate through these challenges. They didn't want to just "fix" Nathan, but rather find ways for him to function within his challenges and unique gifts for the glory of God. Nathan wanted the same thing. Sally tried allowing Nathan to use colored pencils during family reading time. She encouraged Nathan to draw pictures of the characters and their adventures as they read. It really helped. Nathan was able to focus more when his hands were busy and his mind was able to focus on the characters and the story. They also discovered that Nathan was very creative and gifted and he was captivated by the power of story and the hero. This book is a story of a boy struggling with many challenges and the mom who loved him and helped him find the way that God could use this unique and creative person. Sally and Nathan share more of this journey throughout the book. Nathan has written, directed and starred in a full-length motion picture (Confessions of a Prodigal Son) and is pursuing an acting career in New York City. Sally is a popular author and speaker and has a wonderful way of encouraging moms. She can empathize with moms who are raising kids facing all kinds of challenges. Don't miss the chance to be encouraged and inspired by reading the DIFFERENT book. I'd put it at the top of your reading list.

This is the story of a mother who loves her son. It's the kind of mother that we wish we all would have had and are all invited to be. As a mother of three boys I have read many children's psychology books looking for the answers on how to help my boys become acclimated people. This book helped give me settle into peace that I don't need to control everything, but that it's okay that my boys and I are outside the box. I am so thankful for this testimony of faithfulness.

Having a different child is difficult - no doubt about it, but a gift as well. If you have ever questioned why or just had a fleeting thought about how could God expect you to parent such a child - then you NEED this precious book. These different children have so much to offer in this world that expects us to "just fit in". Buy this book you will be encouraged beyond your expectations. Thank you Sally and Nathan for opening up to share your story with us.

Having a "different" child is certainly challenging, and for us, we have questioned ourselves

endlessly because it happens that our firstborn is "different". We have blamed ourselves, blamed each other, and felt like complete failures as parents. Sibling relationships can also become very complicated when a "different" child is involved. Until reading excerpts of this book, nothing had provided our family with the hope and encouragement we've needed. Nathan and Sally reinforced for us that our children are all gifted in unique ways, and as parents, we are called to speak forward into their lives with words of blessing, hope, and confidence! We have the ability to build them up in love, and to see their differences as strengths; Sally's book showed us that it's more a matter of us refocusing the way we see our children, instead of trying to make them look and behave in a way that the world says is "normal". If you need hope and help, this is the book for your family.

I have loved all of Sally Clarkson's books. They have been an invaluable source of encouragement and wisdom to me in my mothering journey thus far. Having met Sally and learned from her in conferences and retreats, as well as her books, I know that although she is a woman of high ideals and has lived an intentional life as a mother, her journey has not been perfect. *Different* offers a real, raw look into her relationship with her "different" son - who was diagnosed with anxiety, OCD, ADHD, OCC, etc. It is a beautiful story of a mother's constant love and support even in the midst of trials and struggles that offers hope to readers with their own "different" children. At this point, I do not have an incredibly "different" child, but their story has encouraged me - a mom who has struggled with depression and anxiety since the birth of my second. It is a lovely reminder that, although imperfect, our different situations can be used for our good and God's glory when we allow Him to work in and through us. I highly recommend this to all moms!

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