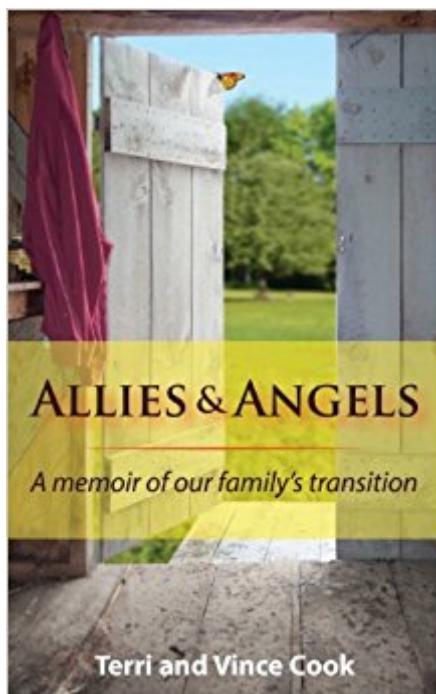


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# Allies & Angels: A Memoir Of Our Family's Transition



## **Synopsis**

The parents of a transgender child reveal how their family transitioned together. For 15 years, the proud parents of two young men believed their younger son was their daughter. *Allies & Angels* is a story of strength, compassion and unconditional love--sharing how these parents supported their son's transition and the lessons learned along the way. Learning their daughter was really their son taught them who they are and who they want to be. This moving story highlights how allies guided and supported them on what they once feared was an unthinkable path. *Allies & Angels* will inspire readers to look at their life differently and embrace their role as an ally. No matter who you are or how you identify, this book will challenge you to find a new acceptance for all and a deeper love for your loved ones. For 15 years, the proud parents of two young men believed their younger son was their daughter. *Allies & Angels* is a story of strength, compassion and unconditional love--sharing how these parents supported their son's transition and the lessons learned along the way. Learning their daughter was really their son taught them who they are and who they want to be. This moving story highlights how allies guided and supported them on what they once feared was an unthinkable path. *Allies & Angels* will inspire readers to look at their life differently and embrace their role as an ally. No matter who you are or how you identify, this book will challenge you to find a new acceptance for all and a deeper love for your loved ones.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

We're Terri and Vince Cook. We've written about a life changing experience. We hope by sharing our story we help change many other lives too. It's been nearly 4 years since we learned the child

we thought was our daughter is really our son. But it was years before that when a suicide attempt introduced us to a world of struggles, with innumerable sleepless nights, endless fears and lots of tears. Our child did not wake up one morning and profess he was a boy, not a girl. Rather, he endured depression, anxiety, bullying, and torment before he could put words to his inner struggle and understood his gender identity was the source of his pain. We confided in few people at first, then slowly surrendered our insecurities to arm ourselves with knowledge. The decision to embrace, rather than reject, our path transformed our lives. We supported our teenage son's transition from female to male. Over the years, our family transitioned along with him. Our son's struggle to understand, accept, and simply be who he is nearly cost him his life. He had a family that loved and supported him, and yet it has been a difficult journey. Many of the difficulties of being transgender (or having a trans loved one) are compounded by the lack of awareness and acceptance in society. For this reason, we're sharing our story ... with the hope of increasing awareness and bringing about change. We understand that most people (including us at one time) have no idea what it means to be transgender or the challenges faced by trans individuals. This is a story of how a young, middle-class family discovered how much they didn't know. Our ignorance translated into fear, desperation, and pain. With a lot of help from others we learned the truth. We think everyone will benefit from the allies and angels in our life. Maya Angelou said, "When you know better, you do better." We hope our story helps people to know and do better--regarding transgender people and all other marginalized populations.

As the parent of a trans teenager, I could relate easily to the struggles they faced as parents. When Vince and Terri were sharing Drew's struggles before the diagnosis, I could have written the same words myself about my child. Many times I was moved to tears, and I admire them, and their family. The reason I gave four stars is that it got a little slow in the latter half, particularly when discussing their employment. I began to feel frustrated, because they are obviously successful engineers with the resources to make things happen for their child. What do parents like myself do? Many people don't have the type of jobs that allow for flex-time, or the financial security to reduce to 30 hours a week, or better yet, send them to a specialized boarding school. This aside, I would give this book to my friends and family members to better understand the struggle, internally and externally, to live a life full of happiness. We ALL deserve that.

Everyone should read this

Allies and Angels has an urgent message, but it does not tell you what to think--instead it shows, through the powerful, heart-wrenching narrative of a loving family, what a difference individuals can make in the lives of transgender youth. I hope it becomes the go-to book for the parents of such kids, and that it inspires the same kind of compassion and respect shown by Drew's family. It should be required reading for all who work with children and young adults of any gender. I'm a little older than Drew, but also grew up in the suburbs of Syracuse, New York and also came out as transgender in my teens. I faced many of the same issues, from big things like bullying and suicidal depression to so-called little things like the pain of school dances and old family photos. Although few struggles compare to being a young man in a female body, there still is little guidance available for these boys or their loved ones. I wish such a book had existed for me and my parents during those difficult years and I hope this helps such families realize they aren't alone. It will definitely improve, and most likely save, many young people's lives.--Elliott DeLine, Author of 'Refuse' and 'I Know Very Well How I Got My Name'

"Allies and Angels is about parenting and faith and living authentic lives. It explores the ways in which we can support our children through love, kindness, compassion and acceptance. It highlights what can happen when we have the love and support of family, and others who are open-minded enough to become part of a life changing journey. As a professional advocate for the trans\* and gender non-conforming community I reap rewards beyond any expectation. The Cook's are a significant part of those rewards. They have found a way to share this story, acknowledge all that contributed in some positive way, critique those who wish us harm and highlight significant challenges others face when they don't have support. Read this book if you want to know how to parent your children through any challenge, big or small, significant or fleeting. Come to understand that "suppressing and rejecting" a [transgender] child robs them and adds tremendously to the already existing burdens that are part of life. This book is a gift that teaches how a change in perspective can have a miraculous impact in ways unimaginable.

Allies & Angels is a story that has the power to open your heart and your mind. Terri and Vince show us what it means to wholly and unconditionally love our children as the wonderful people they were meant to be. Their story is one of compassion, learning, and support that anyone who has or works with children and youth can understand and relate to, even if they don't know someone who is transgender. Their family's journey, through both laughter and tears, offers hope to families and young people going through similar experiences. After reading Allies & Angels you will certainly walk

away with a greater understanding of what it is like to be transgender. If you allow yourself to, you will also understand the joys of loving someone who is transgender.

As someone who came out less than a year ago at the age of 22, and whose parents are in the early stages of understanding and acceptance, this book was very emotional for me. The Cook family's story is so inspiring and heartfelt. Thank you for making yourself vulnerable and writing this story so that others may find hope and come to better understand the experiences of trans\* people and their families. I can only imagine what my life would be like now had I had the strength, courage, and support that Drew had, in particular from his family and the Q Center, to come out at a younger age. A great book for anyone to read - whether you're trans\*, you have family or friends that are, or you just want to learn a little bit more.

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