

STORY OF RISE FROM ISOLATION TO LEADERSHIP

Hendrick opens up about family's mental health struggles

By **EMILY VOTAW Staff Writer** Published: August 2, 2015 4:00AM

WOOSTER -- Success doesn't grow on trees, and sometimes it's the difficulties we face in life that later equip us to truly make the most out of any situation.

Bruce Hendrick, a Wayne County native who owns RBB Systems and Building Trust, knows this very well.

"We've all had struggles, every single one of us," said Hendrick, who recently released "On My Own," a book that chronicles his journey from boyhood to manhood. Hendrick said he originally sat down to pen the tale in 2003, and just the process of writing and publishing the book has been a winding road in and of itself, taking about 13 years from the moment he decided to write the book and the day it was released.



"I grew up in a family that struggled with mental illness," explained Hendrick, whose mother was diagnosed with encephalitis in 1961, shortly after Hendrick's birth.

The disease is an inflammation of the brain, leading to numerous complications, physical and psychological. Hendrick's mother went into a coma due to the illness, and when she woke up, she didn't remember anything about the past two years, including being pregnant with her son or even his birth.

"Right away there was a sort of a distance between us because of that," said Hendrick. "In 1961, there wasn't a lot that a family dealing with mental illness could do, there was very little support. I can only imagine that my mother suffered in silence, as many with mental illnesses did at that time."

Hendrick said even though his father tried his best, in many ways Hendrick was faced with raising himself in a confusing world.

"And somehow I kept on ending up in leadership roles, although I certainly wasn't trying to," said Hendrick, who slowly found himself developing characteristics that might have seemed out of character for a self-described "punk."

Hendrick is very involved with MOCA House and NAMI of Wayne and Holmes Counties, his way of helping out the mental health care industry, a support system that simply wasn't there when he was developing into a young person.

"It's so important that a community can come around these families that are dealing with mental illness," said Hendrick. "Both MOCA House and NAMI are such incredible resources. And they make it clear that recovery is possible."

Hendrick said one of the many things he's learned over the course of his life is "leaders can come from anywhere."

"There's no setting that they all come from, not all of them come from wealthy backgrounds or from highly educated families or anything like that," he said.

As a part of Building Trust, Hendrick travels around the country, giving advice to CEOs on how to strengthen their businesses, something that relates closer to his childhood than one would think. In order to eventually become the man who juggles multiple successful business ventures, Hendrick had to do a lot of learning, something that he tries to impart on those that he speaks to.

"It's just so important to have honest, open communication about everything," said Hendrick. "I grew up very isolated, and I think that as we grow up, we take those challenges that we were presented when we were young and we spend the rest of our lives trying to overcome them."

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