

FOREWORD BY **ERIN RAFTERY RYAN**  
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# BETTER HUMANS

An illustration featuring a variety of hands of different skin tones and wearing different colored sleeves, all reaching up to hold up the large, white, bold letters of the title 'BETTER HUMANS'. The hands are positioned as if they are supporting the text from below.

WHAT THE MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC

TEACHES US ABOUT HUMANITY

**JANEANE BERNSTEIN, EdD**

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Better Humans:

What the Mental Health Pandemic Teaches Us About Humanity

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Better Humans* is dedicated to you, Generation Z on up, because you have been struggling in the past few years, and perhaps your entire lifetime. You have not always been seen, listened to, or recognized for your strengths and struggles, and the pandemic only made life more challenging. I hope you find inspiration in reading *Better Humans* because you have great power to create sustainable change the world needs desperately right now and in the future.

A huge thank you to my contributors who opened their hearts and shared their insights and invaluable research, personal stories, and wisdom. Our conversations stayed with me long after we were finished. In a time of tremendous disconnect and social isolation, I was humbled and honored to listen to your journeys and learn how we can move forward to become better humans.

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I learned a lot about my own mental health during this journey, and the mental health of the nation. If I can be a catalyst in helping end the stigma around mental health and encourage the creation of purpose-driven mental health initiatives, then we will finally begin to heal our country. The mental health pandemic is vast, and the future depends on