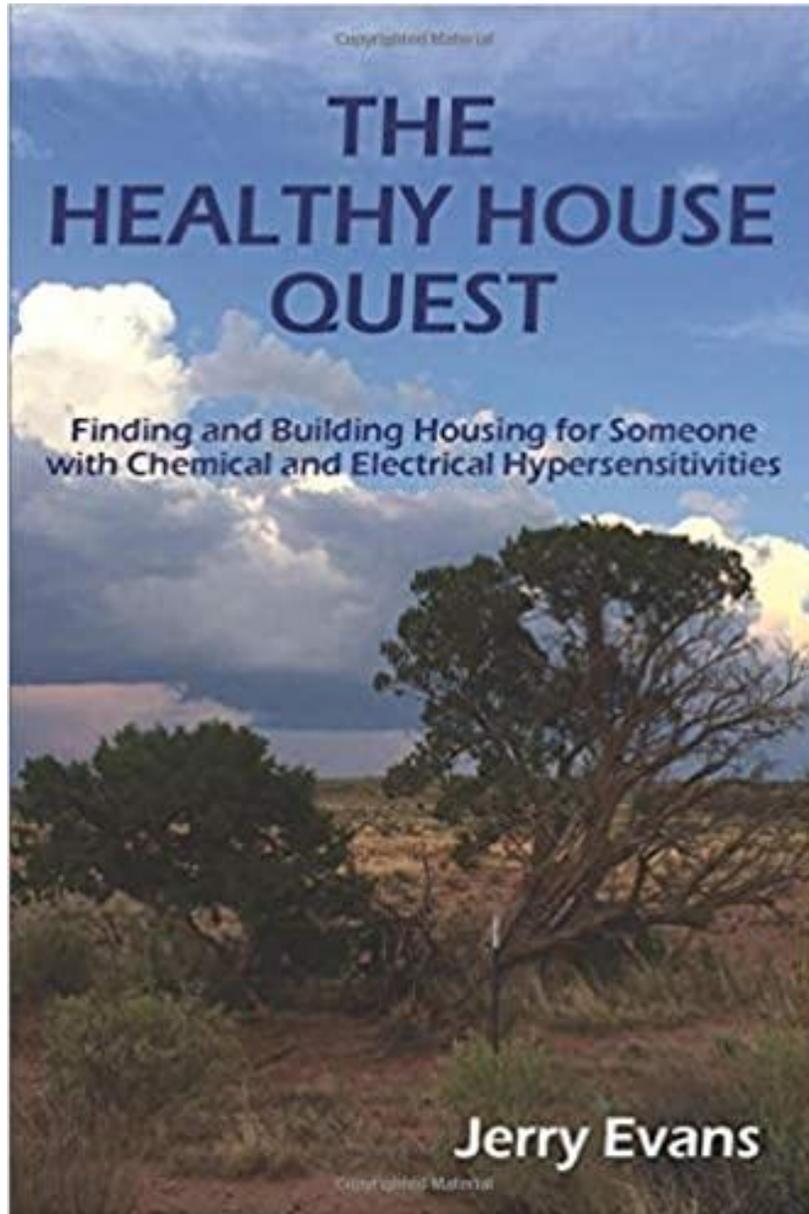


# **The Healthy House Quest by Jerry Evans**

**Book review by Joy Wellings**



**The story about a man with severe chemical and electrical sensitivities, who travels to look for a healthy house in a healthy location. He eventually builds a house himself.**

*Keywords: healthy house, environmental illness, chemical sensitivity, electrical sensitivity, MCS, book, story, memoir, Jerry Evans*

Although *The Healthy House Quest* may be considered a sequel to Jerry Evans' *Chemical and Electrical Hypersensitivities – A Sufferer's Memoir* (published 2010), they are independent accounts of coping with MCS and EHS. The first book tells of the onset of his sensitivities and his search for appropriate treatment and a better quality of life. This second book takes the reader on the author's quest for a safe location and house in which he can live. While much of the book details the choices made (and why) and the highs and lows of the build, this is also a journey of optimism and hope. "It is possible to live a life in dignity and without constant suffering despite having severe chemical and electrical sensitivities." (p. 5).

The book starts with his search for the right location in which to build, while struggling to stabilize his health and energy levels in order to cope with the coming workload. He gratefully accepts advice from others who have already built their own safe homes. Throughout the actual building process, his determination to never give up and to do it correctly are astounding. He draws heavily on his engineering skills, professional knowledge of electronics, and his acute awareness of the natural and man-made environment. He does much of the investigative work himself, designs the house, and supervises the entire building process.

The strength of his resolve never wavers in the face of unhelpful attitudes by some suppliers and bureaucrats, the frustrations around the non-arrival of materials and contractors, and the additional challenges of building completely off grid. If, for some reason, progress slows or stops altogether, he takes the opportunity to relax and regain the strength to carry on. Looking ahead to the possibility that he may become more physically disabled in the future, he has the foresight to build the house with wider wheelchair accessible doorways, and installs grab rails.

Building with materials not usually used in mainstream construction is more expensive and can be more time-consuming for workmen. Jerry Evans openly reveals his financial situation, and also outlines how he cut costs by researching, purchasing – and sometimes carting – whatever he could.

The Afterword is a sensitive and sensible look at how positive changes can come about to make people more accepting of complex diseases like MCS and EHS, and also how attitudes of medical professionals and researchers are slowly changing.

People with MCS and EHS are an embarrassment and threat to certain powerful industries, and this slows the progress towards acceptance and recognition of these debilitating diseases. Citing examples where public pressure instigated change, e.g. ramps for wheelchairs, the rise of the organic food market, the banning of cigarette smoking in public places, etc., the author knows it is possible that "MCS and EHS will create their own story toward acceptance, scientific understanding, treatments and accommodation, but it will not be easy." (p. 234) This book is itself a vital part of the movement toward acceptance and understanding.

The Foreword (by David O. Carpenter, MD, Director, Institute for Health and the Environment, University at Albany, New York) and the introduction by the author "may even help convince skeptical friends and family members" (p. 4) that MCS and EHS sufferers have special and legitimate needs.

A categorized Bibliography and an Index conclude this important contribution to the literature on living with MCS and EHS. Jerry Evans deserves our most grateful thanks on this most readable, first hand account to inspire and encourage us to keep fighting for what we need.

*The Healthy House Quest* is published by Turquoise Rose Publishing in the United States. It is available through Amazon.com in all countries they serve.

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