

Powerful Patient 2009 week 1

Host: Joyce Graff, WebTalkRadio.net

Shut Up about your Perfect Kid

Joyce talks with two sisters from Massachusetts who each have a child with special needs. They have written a book that has helped them find the humor and joy in their children and in the difficult situations they confront each day. There are lessons here for all parents, and for anyone with special needs.



Patricia Konjoian
and Gina Gallagher

1) **About ShutUp Industries**

When Patricia Konjoian and Gina Gallagher began writing *Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid!* they were feeling some anger toward those parents who brag about their kids and ignore children who are less than perfect. They were feeling hurt that no one asked about their children. In the course of writing the book, however, they gained a greater understanding of their own and other people's feelings.

Patty and Gina are sisters who each have a child with special needs, and a total of three other "typical" children.

Their book, *Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid!* takes an irreverent look at their lives and challenges, and asks all parents to understand them better, and help to include all children in school activities and play dates.

As they have shared this book with other parents through 2008 they have been pleasantly surprised at the extent to which all parents relate to parts of the book. It has helped them and their children generate conversation with others about their special needs, and the accommodations that make it easier for their to be comfortable in the mainstream.

See their website, which they describe as a happy place for parents of children with special needs, at <http://www.shutupabout.com>
They list a number of resources for parents, and includes a members area where people can share their stories and find support.

2) **Welcome to Holland**

The essay "Welcome to Holland" referenced in the interview, can be found at <http://www.our-kids.org/Archives/Holland.html>

3) **Last Year's Interview**

We spoke with Gina and Patty last year. See the interview in the Powerful Patient archive, http://www.powerfulpatient.org/archive/2007/07d_special_needs.php

4) An Excerpt from the Book

From their website, here is an excerpt from the book, *Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid!*

http://powerfulpatient.org/program_guides/week0901_shutup_att.pdf