

# AMANDA LAPERA

Award-Winning Author |  
Speaker | Educator |  
Mental Health Advocate



## ABOUT AMANDA

Amanda LaPera is an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction and a speaker whose work explores the role of hope and resilience in overcoming trauma. Her books include *Losing Dad*, *Paranoid Schizophrenia: A Family's Search for Hope* and its sequel *Finding Dad: An End to the Search*, as well as the coming-of-age *Desert of Dreams Series*. Her books are recognized for their emotional honesty and depth. She devoted ten years to the NAMI-OC Board of Directors and has been an educator for over twenty years.

## SIGNATURE SPEAKING TOPICS

- TOGETHER IS BETTER: Lessons from lived experience
- MENTAL ILLNESS & FAMILY IMPACT: What needs to change
- RESILIENCE IN UNCERTAINTY: Navigating systems and stigma
- STORYTELLING AS HEALING: Power of sharing your story
- OVERCOMING ADVERSITY: Motivational - Reclaiming identity

## WHAT DO AUDIENCES GAIN?

- Practical tools for resilience
- Mental health awareness & empathy
- Emotional connection + perspective shift
- Actionable mindset changes

## PRAISE FOR AMANDA'S FICTION

"A realistic portrayal of a troubled upbringing"

— **Kirkus Reviews** (*Reach for Hope*)

"a heartfelt tale of resilience and hope."

— **Publishers Weekly BookLife** (*Dare to Dream*)

BOOK AMANDA LAPERA | Keynotes •  
Conferences • Panels • Workshops •  
Podcasts • Speeches • Media Interviews

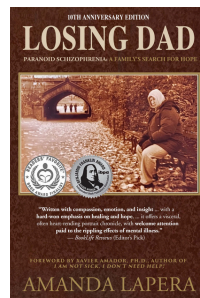
## BOOKS



### DESERT OF DREAMS SERIES

Coming-of-age standalone stories that explore connection, identity, trauma, hope, and resilience.

- *Sway with the Wind* (prequel)
- *Dare to Dream* (Book 1)
- *Reach for Hope* (Book 2)
- *Embrace the Truth* (Book 3)



### LOSING DAD

PSYCHOLOGY MEMOIR:

*Losing Dad, Paranoid Schizophrenia: A Family's Search for Hope*

- Award-winning
- Amazon Category Bestseller



### FINDING DAD

PSYCHOLOGY MEMOIR:

*Finding Dad, Paranoid Schizophrenia: An End to the Search*

- Award-winning
- Amazon Category Bestseller

## CREDIBILITY & RECOGNITION

- IBPA Benjamin Franklin Silver Award
- BookLife Editor's Pick
- LQHS Teacher of the Year (2 times)
- Honored by Mental Health Assoc. of Orange County
- Former Board Member, NAMI-OC (10 years)
- BookLife Prize Quarter Finalist
- Readers' Favorite Award Finalist
- IAN Book of the Year Award Finalist

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## ABOUT AMANDA LAPERA

For thirteen years, Amanda LaPera grew up in the small rural community of Lake Los Angeles, where, much like her characters, she was disappointed to learn there wasn't a lake and everything she planted died. She and her friends survived, buoyed by resilience and determination. Now her hobbies include watching hummingbirds in her yard surrounded by trees, playing board games with her husband, taunting her sons, and appeasing her dogs. She has sworn off succulents, because she believes they belong in the desert.

Amanda LaPera is a national award-winning author. Her book, *Losing Dad, Paranoid Schizophrenia: A Family's Search for Hope*, won a Silver IBPA Award, was a BookLife Prize quarter finalist and a Readers' Favorite Awards finalist. Her sequel *Finding Dad, Paranoid Schizophrenia: An End to the Search* was a finalist in the IAN Book of the Year Awards. She teaches English and is a member of the California Writers Club and the Southern California Writers Association.

Her *Desert of Dreams Series* are standalone stories set during the 1980s and 90s in a small town in the California High Desert. With duplicate timelines, the books weave together a connection of friendship, place, and the courage to overcome. She is currently pivoting towards writing dystopian fiction.

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## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### ABOUT AMANDA

What inspired you to become a novelist?

How did growing up in California's High Desert shape the stories you tell?

### THE DESERT OF DREAMS SERIES

What inspired the *Desert of Dreams Series*, and why did you choose to tell it through interconnected standalone novels?

The High Desert is more than a setting—it shapes the emotional landscape of your stories. Why was that important to you?

Your books are set in the 1980s and 1990s. How do you balance historical authenticity with compelling storytelling?

Your novels tackle difficult subjects, yet they're ultimately stories of hope. How do you write honestly about hardship without losing sight of resilience, humor, and human connection?

Do your characters ever surprise you?

### READERS & WHAT'S NEXT

What do you hope readers take away after finishing one of your novels?

For readers discovering the *Desert of Dreams Series*, where would you recommend they begin, and does reading order matter?

You're currently writing a dystopian fiction series. What inspired that new direction, and what themes connect it to *Desert of Dreams*?

*Interviewers are welcome to explore beyond these suggested questions.*

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## MEDIA COVERAGE & EXPERIENCE

- **Featured Guest on Podcast:** *It Matters How We Treat One Another*
- **Front Cover Magazine and Featured Article:** *Laguna Hills Living Magazine* (print)
- **Author Interview:** *San Diego Voyager Daily Inspiration*
- **Presenter:** NAMI CA Conference Workshops
- **Speaker / Mental Health Panels:** *Each Mind Matters* Conference Workshops
- **News Article:** *Huntington Beach News*
- **Motivational Speaker:** Littlerock High School and Lake LA School
- **News Article:** *Antelope Valley Press*
- **Featured Storyteller:** CA State Historic Park Antelope Valley Indian Museum

## MEDIA GALLERY



## TESTIMONIALS

"A realistic portrayal of a troubled upbringing"  
—**Kirkus Reviews** (*Reach for Hope*)

"a compelling memoir **especially highly recommended.**"  
—D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, *Midwest Book Review* (*Finding Dad*)

"**compelling from start to finish ... a must-read.**" —Richard Prause, *Readers' Favorite* (*Sway with the Wind*)

"**exceptional** characterization... witticism in the dialogue... excellent prose... symbolism...**profound**"  
—Divine Zape, *Readers' Favorite 5-Star Review* (*Embrace the Truth*)

"uniquely powerful, deeply personal"  
—*Publishers Weekly BookLife Prize* (*Losing Dad* Quarter Finalist)



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