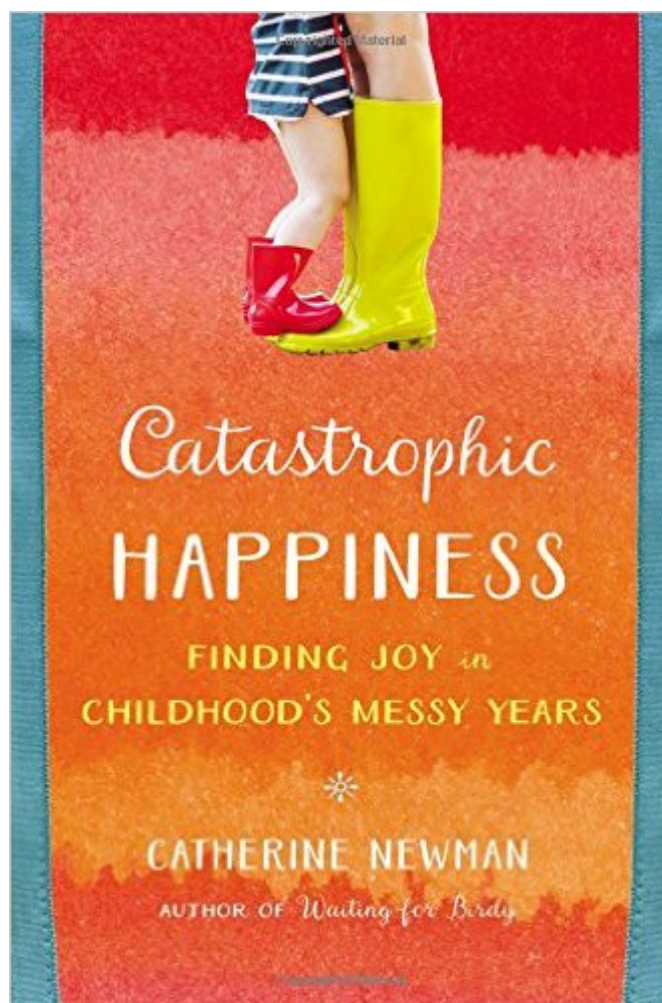


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Catastrophic Happiness: Finding Joy In Childhood's Messy Years



Synopsis

A comic and heartwarming memoir about childhood's second act from Real Simple journalist Catherine Newman. Much is written about a child's infancy and toddler years, which is good since children will never remember it themselves. It is ages 4-14 that make up the second act, as Catherine Newman puts it in this delightfully candid, outlandishly funny new memoir about the years that "your children will remember as childhood." Following Newman's son and daughter as they blossom from preschoolers into teenagers, CATASTROPHIC HAPPINESS is about the bittersweet joy of raising children--and the ever-evolving landscape of issues parents traverse. In a laugh out-loud, heart-wrenching, relatable voice, Newman narrates events as momentous as grief and as quietly moving as the moonlit face of a sleeping child. From tantrums and friendship to fear and even sex, Newman's fresh take will appeal to any parent riding this same roller coaster of laughter and heartbreak.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Catherine Newman is magic. Somehow, she uses words that sound just like the ones you and I use every day to lyrically articulate the way in which being a parent ecstatically breaks your heart, over and over and over....She's hilarious and keen-eyed about the bumbling and fierce way we love our kids, and just a great writer. Nobody else could explain why teenagers are, in fact, lovable. I don't read "lifestyle" magazines, except to read her columns; I don't write product reviews, except I am making an exception in this case to say to you: Buy This Damn Book. It really will make you laugh

and cry out loud, and nobody deserves their cut of your \$16 more than Catherine Newman does.

If you're a fan of Catherine Newman, you'll recognize portions of some of these essays; it's like running into unexpected friends at a party in a great new restaurant. For those of us who already love her work, and for those lucky enough to be discovering her for the first time, this book is wonderful, hitting just the right balance between poignant ("The parent I want to be floats in and out of my life, and some days it speaks through me, and other days I lunge after it like a shaft of sunlight I want to capture.") and funny ("I have always loved the camping, but now I look back and feel like maybe it kind of used to suck.") Now I would like her to write and publish a book about parenting teens and also, perhaps, caring for aging parents, immediately so I know how to handle it with as much grace and humor as she does.

I've been reading Catherine Newman since back in the days when it was just Ben (no Birdy). Ben is close in age to my son (who is now 15 and taller than me), so I feel kind of like we all grew up together. I also read "Waiting for Birdy" many, many years ago and loved it, too. This book should be required reading for all mothers everywhere. You will understand and relate to the all-consuming love and profound awe of this little person (or persons) who came out of your body and is every day becoming a more amazing human being. You will totally get the deep, gut-wrenching fear that anything (God forbid!) should ever happen to this precious human you birthed. But at some point, she comes to the totally rational conclusion that we mothers (and fathers, too) should cherish every moment with our amazing offspring, rather than living in terror that SOMETHING COULD HAPPEN. A roller coaster ride of love, fear, happiness, a few tears as we watch our precious children grow before our eyes. Loved every page!!!

I just love this book. It's just personal essays about parenting, but the author is so funny. Thoughtful, too. It's the kind of book that will make parents recognize themselves, laugh really hard, and appreciate their own family lives a little bit more instead of just letting it race by them while they're paying attention to other things. Also, this author writes especially well about the stupid, cruel things our culture does to children where gender is concerned.

The raw authenticity with which Catherine Newman portrays the small nuggets of parenthood is relatable and lovely, striking a perfect balance of depth, delicacy and beauty. The germs, the snakes, the watching our kids breathe as they sleep. All of it. Through exquisite writing,

Catastrophic Happiness reminds us of the subtleties of the parenting experience--the self-doubt, the fears, and the sweetness of it all.

Even before I had a kid, I loved Catherine Newman's writing. She writes in such a true and authentic voice that I think everyone can relate to. The fumbling imperfection that is humanity, but one that is always turning toward the beauty and poignancy of life, without sounding cloying or irritating. Buy this book. You will feel known and inspired and connected to something bigger and meaningful.

If you are looking for an ideal Mother's Day gift for a mother or grandmother, look no further. This is an exquisitely written look at motherhood/childhood that any woman can identify with. The author conjures up such perfect mental images on every page, and writes with just the right amount of humor, love, and empathy.....you won't be sorry you read this.

Catherine Newman is a master of taking the many mundane moments of parenting and placing a lens of humor and illumination upon them. She is funny and profound and maybe best of all, she calls up a sense of persistent gratitude without cloying sentimentality. And we believe her because her gratitude comes not from the idea that family life is exactly as she hoped it would be, but that she has molded and adjusted her hopes to fit what is right in front of her, which is her children, changing and pressing forward, a time-sensitive and precious gift.

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