

Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents

By Jane Isay

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We raise our children to be independent and lead fulfilling lives, but when they finally do, staying close becomes more complicated than ever. And for every bewildered mother who wonders why her children don't call, there is a frustrated son or daughter who just wants to be treated like a grownup. Now, renowned editor Jane Isay delivers the perfect gift to both parents *and* their adult children—real-life wisdom and advice on how to stay together without falling apart.

Using extensive interviews with people from ages twenty-five to seventy, Isay shows that we're far from alone in our struggles to make this new, adult relationship work. She offers up groundbreaking insights and deeply moving stories that will inspire those in even the toughest situations. Isay's warmth and wit shine through on every page as she charts an invaluable course through the confusing, and often painful, interactions parents and children can face. *Walking on Eggshells* is the much-needed road map that will keep you connected to the people you love most.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Jane Isay, the editor who discovered Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* and commissioned Rachel Simmons' *Odd Girl Out*, has written an insightful, compelling book about "the delicate lifelong bond between grown kids and their parents." Isay traveled across the country and interviewed nearly 75 people (including dozens of parents and grown children), and *Walking on Eggshells* shares moving stories that will help parents and grown children build strong new adult relationships with one another. We asked Po Bronson, author of *Why Do I Love These People?*, to read Isay's book and give us his take. Read his review below. --Daphne Durham

Guest Reviewer: Po Bronson

 Po Bronson is the author of the brilliant bestseller *What Should I Do with My Life?*, the powerful and poignant *Why Do I Love These People?*, a hilarious novel called *The Bombadiers*, and *The Nudist on the Late Shift*, a collection of "true stories" about Silicon Valley.

When we tell family stories, we so often focus on the beginning and the end. The beginning is the two decades of our childhood and adolescence, and it's been the favorite narrative arc ever since Freud. What happens in your childhood does not stay in your childhood--it haunts the rest of your life. In the last decade, we've suddenly heard more stories of the end--narratives constructed around a parent's death, and often the year spent caring for that parent on their deathbed.

Because these are the conventional narratives, they often distract our attention from the many decades in between. We barely even have a terminology for these years--and the terms we employ sound like oxymorons: "Adult Children," "Parents of Adults." There's an old saying: you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. In the beginning this is true--we're in the care of our parents, like it or not. And in the ending this is also true--they're in our care, like it or not. But in the long middle, this isn't so true. The middle is a period where both child and parent can keep their distance, if they prefer. And often do, harboring resentment. We too often accept that this is just the way it is. "She's never going to change" is a common, fatalist refrain.

In *Walking on Eggshells*, Jane Isay shines a much-needed light on these years. With a graceful respect for the families she investigates, she tells their stories--how they lost their love, and how they regained it. Isay covers the many ways families develop resentment, and the many techniques they employed to make peace. She shows that small changes in routine can go a long way to restoring goodwill. But it's not a self-help book; it's more of a literary contemplation, and we learn more by inspiration than by emulation.

Though this book addresses the parents directly, I suspect it will be passed back and forth, between generations, in many a family. --Po Bronson

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. As baby boomer parents age, they're discovering the empty-nest syndrome is nothing compared to what happens when their kids graduate from college and start leading lives of their own. To a generation famous for being involved in every aspect of their children's lives, it can be upsetting to find that those children no longer need or welcome your advice. How does one parent children who no longer need parenting? Publishing veteran Isay, an editor and mother of two grown sons, interviews scores of parents and adult children of all ages to see how they are doing it. The stories are heartwarming, and Isay recounts them with intelligence and compassion. What does she find? Nothing Ann Landers hasn't already told us. Mainly: don't give advice; make friends with your children's significant others; and remember that love heals. The most compelling story is Isay's own. One wishes it were the centerpiece of the book rather than tacked on as an epilogue. Her experience is an example of her most interesting discovery: children are quick to forgive and often the ones who take the initiative in forging a new brand of closeness between themselves and their parents—a closeness that is best described as adult. (Mar. 27)

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Review

"Jane Isay gives us a hope chest of hard-earned wisdom and aha moments, and a mirror in which we can safely examine ourselves and our families." —Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*

"From her own loving heart and from richly revealing interviews with parents and adult children, Jane Isay has fashioned a wonderfully wise and constructive intergenerational guide. Read it and learn!"

—Judith Viorst, author of *I'm Too Young to Be Seventy and Other Delusions*

"A gently told, achingly honest book about the search for love and acceptance that aging parents and their adult children bring to each other and the tragic misunderstandings that get in their way and break their hearts."

—Judith S. Wallerstein, Ph.D., author of *What About the Kids? Raising Children Before, During, and After Divorce*

"Jane Isay's warm, intelligent, reassuring voice shines through her illuminating stories about the delicate, lifelong bond between parents and their grown children. Anyone who has ever been in a parent-child kaffuffle about rules, traditions, money, control, or anything else will find wisdom and encouragement in this lovely book."

—Carol Tavis, Ph.D., coauthor of *Mistakes Were Made (but not by me)*

"The brilliance of *Walking on Eggshells* lies in Isay's uncanny ability to keep our love and good intentions in focus so that we all— parents and adult children—can untangle the unhealthy knots in our relationships before they cause harm."

—Ira Byock, M.D., author of *Dying Well*

"With Isay's sage advice, we can make life with our adult children calmer, closer and more enjoyable. This is a great read for every parent who has ever, in discussing their adult children, used the phrase 'walking on eggshells.'"

—Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Todd:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each book has different aim or maybe goal; it means that book has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They may be reading whatever they consider because their hobby is definitely reading a book. How about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, individual feel need book after they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you will want this Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents.

Tony Paulson:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? May be reading a book might be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the guide untitled Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents can be very good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Russell Wade:

Beside this particular Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents in your phone, it can give you a way to get closer to the new knowledge or information. The information and the knowledge you are going to got here is fresh from oven so don't be worry if you feel like an older people live in narrow village. It is good thing to have Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents because this book offers for you readable information. Do you sometimes have book but you do not get what it's exactly about. Oh come on, that wil happen if you have this with your hand. The Enjoyable blend here cannot be questionable, including treasuring beautiful island. Use you still want to miss the idea? Find this book and also read it from at this point!

Brett Nash:

In this era which is the greater man or woman or who has ability to do something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple method to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to have a look at some books. One of many books in the top listing in your reading list is definitely Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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