
The Nice Girl Syndrome

10 steps to empowering
yourself and ending abuse

Stop Being
Manipulated
and Abused—
and Start
Standing Up
for Yourself



Beverly Engel

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How women can overcome the pressure to please others and feel free to be their true selves Are you too nice for your own good? Do family members manipulate you? Do coworkers take advantage of you? If this sounds familiar, read *The Nice Girl Syndrome*. In this breakthrough guide, renowned author and therapist Beverly Engel, who has helped thousands of women recognize and leave emotionally abusive relationships, can show you how to take control of your life and take care of yourself.

Engel explains that women today simply cannot afford to be Nice Girls, because women who are too nice send the message that they are easy targets and are much more likely to be victimized emotionally, physically, and sexually. She identifies the seven different types of Nice Girls and helps you understand which type or types might apply to you. Engel helps you determine whether the Nice Girl Syndrome is keeping you in an abusive relationship or in manipulative situations and helps you change Nice Girl beliefs and behaviors that are holding you back.

Shows you how to confront the beliefs and behaviors that keep you stuck in a Nice Girl act as you replace them with healthier, more empowering ones Includes inspiring stories of women Engel has worked with who have found the courage and strength to stop taking abuse and start standing up for themselves "This book will challenge, entertain, and empower its readers."--*Publishers Weekly* (starred review) Written by renowned author and therapist Beverly Engel, who has helped thousands of women recognize and leave emotionally abusive relationships Filled with wise advice, powerful exercises, and practical prescriptions, *The Nice Girl Syndrome* shows you step by step how to take control of your life and be your own strong woman.

The Nice Girl Syndrome: Stop Being Manipulated and Abused -- And Start Standing Up for Yourself Details

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Author : Beverly Engel

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And Start Standing Up for Yourself Beverly Engel**

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???? ????? says

some sort of sexism, i think.

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Joy says

Love it! It's like therapy!

Onthebrightside says

This book was spot on! I am way too nice!

Leanora says

I tried to read this, I really did. Twice! But the victim-blaming, judgment, and condescension just made me feel gross. Also? Suuuuuuper cis/heteronormative. No thanks.

L Walker says

I don't really feel like I got much out of this book to be honest, other than to really confirm that yes, I'm waaaay too nice. There are a lot of 'exercises' that the author recommends you do, which I really wasn't willing to stop everything and do. I would have preferred situational examples like 'If Nancy says this to you, then x would be a good response'. After reading the book, I wished that the not-so-nice people of the world could read a book about being nice, instead of the nice people having to become b@%&c#s to get along in the world. I was brought up being nice and in my 40s, it's ingrained in me, so I'm likely not going to change at this point. If that's me being weak and not a 'strong woman' as the author insinuates, then oh well. As other reviewers have said, I feel a little mixed about this book.

Leah says

While this book uses extreme examples of what the dangers of being a Nice Girl are (physical, emotional, and sexual abuse), there are many things in it that are useful for women with milder versions of Nice Girl Syndrome. Nice, unfortunately, gets you nowhere. People will prey on you, manipulate you, and take advantage of you if they can, and this book gives some strategies for avoiding that.

A lot of the things in it seem to be common sense and common knowledge, but sometimes it's nice (no pun intended) to have things clearly spelled out for you.

Travel Writing says

I really enjoy Beverly Engle's writing style and the way she explains things.

This book had some great exercises and reflection activities.

The message could also be a bit blunt in some places, but if you are reading a book about not being a nice girl- you probably have ignored the kind, sweet advice from a few friends, perhaps a therapist and may need a tiny dose of bluntness.

I would suggest reading Gavin de Becker's "The Gift of Fear" if you want a real eye opener on how not listening to your intuition and insisting on being a 'nice girl' can literally cost you your life. I like that Engle made that perfect clear- we cannot afford to be nice girls in today's society. No points given for being a martyr. (She never used that phrasing- that is all me)

Andrea says

I liked this book. Although I'm not an extreme as depicted in this book, given the fact that I was raised in an abusive environment with selfish family members and a misogynist community, I had a lot of trouble growing up. I felt extremely repressed and literally inside a cage tied with eavy chains to the ground. Making me feel bad for who I was or what I liked or for standing up for myself, was the central technique applied usually in raising girls, not only at home but also in school. I faught until I gave out and much to my dislike and self loathing I became a nice girl, because in that toxic environment there was no other way. But thank God, I moved to North America and I started to slowly rediscover myself and bring to life the little girl that was locked up by brainwashed individuals and a misogynistic society.

Amy says

This book has a set of effective suggestions for the so very many of us who hold ourselves to a higher standard than all of those around us, and who are, therefore, often used by others.

Beverly Engel uses examples of women who were abused and offers suggestions for how to escape from or avoid an abusive situation (all the while without blaming those who are abused for the actions of the abusers), and how to become more empowered. The book offers suggested affirmations and ways to feel and internalize the concept of the affirmation so that it is more powerful and accessible.

I found the examples of situations familiar, the suggestions valuable, and I believe I will need to read this book several more times...and that it will be useful each time I do read it.

Wagatwe Wanjuki says

Now I am a little embarrassed that I was interested enough in reading this book. My intuition told me that this would be a book that would piss me off, but I did not want to dismiss it without giving it a shot. I am pleased to say my gut feelings were proven only partially right; I surprisingly was still able to get something out of this book. I finished this book with a surprising feeling of validation, empowerment, and eagerness to use the new skills I read in here.

I am indisputably a Nice Girl; I have consistently been someone who has been very kind (sometimes overly so) to those I love even if they do not treat me with a fraction of the amount of love and respect I provide them. I inevitably would get upset/confused as to why people I treat well consistently treat me like crap, but now it really has helped me realize my actions and my love will not change the actions of others. Being fair does not guarantee fair treatment.

Anyway, one problem is that I felt that the stories that Engel wrote did not relate to me very well. I generally have this problem and I am not sure if it is just me or not, but I struggle to find profiles or examples of other people in self-help type books that really resonate with me. The list that Engel procure as to why I am Nice Girl and how I need to change it were almost useless to me, but I was able to write my own personalized tips between the lines to make them relevant to my life.

My issues with the book: it was heteronormative, it placed the burden on victims to not be mistreated or abused, and it felt like it was full of contradictions. She insists she isn't victim blaming but talks about how women "let" themselves be abused; I honestly believe that abuse can be inevitable with no regards to the victim's personality. She says that women "biologically" are this and men are "hard wired" for that (bleh), but then talks about how women are socialized to be passive in this patriarchal world (which is more talking my language).

Overall I am still happy I read this book, despite its shortfalls. While I was able to decipher what I would need to take out of this book, I wonder if many readers would be able to do the same. She starts off the book with insisting that she isn't victim blaming, but I think we are in dangerous territory when we continue to concentrate on writing self-help books for women on avoiding emotional and physical abuse and don't think about writing books about "hey, don't abuse people even if they're really nice." This belief gave me an overall uneasiness about this book and I don't think I'd necessarily recommend the whole thing, but I would probably be willing to recommend a passage or two with my personal notes and disclaimers.

Debbie Mitchell says

Beverly Engel is my number one favorite authority on abuse and how to heal from it. This book has helped me to heal from some past experiences. I would recommend it to anyone who keeps finding themselves in abusive relationships.

Meghan says

Saying "I don't mean to victim blame but..." doesn't cut it. I also found the tone condescending and I was more pissed off than inspired reading this book.

Beth Lequeuvre says

Why do I keep reading self help books? All they ever do is make me mad.

Eugenie says

This is an OK book, but the author comes off as defensively reacting to some major hurt from a male. I understand about being assertive and standing up for yourself, but fully half of the book seems to be aimed at males and how they "take advantage" of females in one way or another. This is the impression given in the book and a viewpoint I don't agree with. I think this book could have been more effective if it dealt with a more open range of situations, rather than just domestic relationships. Overall, some good tips given, but the author comes off as angry and a little too defensive. Moderately recommended, though there are better books out there that deal with boundaries and taking care of yourself.

Rose says

I think the hardest thing about writing this review was figuring out why this book annoyed me so much for the subject matter it addressed. It should've been something I received well given the subject matter and its intents as a self-help book, but the more I read it, the more I ended up reading mixed messages within it.

I tend to pick up self-help/health/wellness guides at random in many different aspects - social wellness, spiritual wellness, physical and emotional wellness among a number of different factors, and I do it for a variety of different groups - women's health being a strong interest of mine as well. The title of this made me raise my eyebrows, though I've heard in social/health circles about the dominance of "nice girl" or "nice guy" syndrome - where people described as such are associated as being passive, overly accommodating, and inattentive to their own needs for the sake of pleasing others. Also for being unable to say "no" in a healthy way. It's a real issue not limited to gender, but in this particular work - Beverly Engel addresses it with respect to abusive/manipulative relationships and addresses the matter to women. That's a fair topic to cover given her background as a psychotherapist and addressing sexual abuse and women's health issues. But I think juxtaposing this particular work with others on the same topic, it pales in comparison and falters more often than not.

It's a book that attempts to be blunt in a "tough love" sort of way, but I couldn't get over how it comes across with victim blaming - type statements and negative talk throughout the text. It sounds more patronizing than encouraging women to develop healthier esteem habits and assertiveness. The fact that a section of this book is entitled "Strong Women Aren't Nice" made me want to throw the book against the wall. Well, Mrs. Engel,

if I may state for the record: Strong women aren't "mean" either. I think strength has more to do with how one applies and assert themselves for what they want in life.

Skip this one. There are much better texts out there that are encouraging and help women become stronger about themselves emotionally, spiritually, and assertively than this text. For a so called "feminist" text, it's really horrible.

Overall score: 1/5 stars
