



Inconsolable: How I Threw My Mental Health Out With the Diapers

Marrit Ingman

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Marrit Ingman became a mother on February 27, 2002. She went crazy—also on February 27, 2002. Her journey began with a plate of carne guisada and led to an emergency cesarian, ankyloglossia, colic, gastroesophageal reflux, eczema, Zoloft, Paxil, peanut allergy, suicidal ideation, hepatitis, and a whole lot of pie. Ingman documents the agony of elimination diets and tearful, sleepless nights with the same candor and humor she does the ecstasy of mama's night out and her own invention, the Playgroup Drinking Game.

Ingman addresses her own postpartum depression, her feelings of inadequacy, and her self-admittedly ridiculous perception that her infant son truly hates her. With irony, sarcasm, and wit, Ingman paints a portrait of parenthood far unlike the popular image of glowing bliss. She recounts the painful and difficult moments of babyhood with her colicky, difficult child with a mix of humor and anguish that reflects the transformative process of becoming a parent—the compromises, struggles, useless advice, and failed expectations.

Inconsolable: How I Threw My Mental Health Out With the Diapers Details

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Jacki says

What causes postpartum depression (PPD)? Who gets PPD? How long does it last? How far-reaching are its effects on mothers and children? And isn't it horribly boring to read about PPD if you're not even a parent?

Not if it's Marrit Ingman.

Ingman went through pregnancy with every intention of making all the right parenting choices and the expectation that she would form an instant bond with her baby that would bring joy and fulfillment to her life. From the moment her intended vaginal delivery turned into an emergency C-section, though, Ingman learned that parenthood is made up of failed good intentions. Next thing she knew, she and her husband had a baby with acid reflux, which caused him to projectile-vomit constantly. He also had the dreaded colic, which caused him to scream and cry non-stop, meaning Ingman lived in a state of constant sleep deprivation. Oh, and did I mention he had eczema and would scratch himself bloody? AND the food allergies. Don't forget the food allergies. And the contact allergies... Is it any wonder Ingman had a mental breakdown?

Ingman chronicles her adventures in new motherhood, from exploding diapers to useless doctors to judgmental fellow parents. She exposes the damage done to her mental health: the suicidal thoughts, the cutting, the yelling fits when she couldn't stand her son's crying for one more second, the mini-catatonia spells when she simply could not make herself react to her child, no matter how many books he threw at her. Along the way, she offers insight into PPD causes that go beyond the chemical and instead stem from our culture: the isolation of new mothers, the media ads and outside-looking-in perspective that causes the pre-parental to believe that children will be a source of boundless joy and fulfillment, the endless judgment parents face from anyone who doesn't agree with their choices...and whatever choice you make, someone is going to disagree.

Infused with dark wit, hope, and the strength of someone who survived hell and became a new person in the process, Inconsolable is a frank insider's look at PPD that slices a giant hole in the perception that parenthood is one long episode of life-altering bliss. Ingman's mission is not an attack on parenthood, however. Instead, she urges parents to offer each support and compassion instead of competition and judgment, to be honest about their struggles rather than try to put a happy face on their lives. A great read for anyone facing new parenthood (PPD affects both genders and happens to adoptive parents as well as biological parents!), Inconsolable is entertaining, educational, and worth your time.

Now, those of you who personally know me are thinking, "Why the eff is Jacki reading books about PPD? She's not pregnant, is she?"...Well, if you want to know, you'll have to finish reading this post at <http://infinitereads.com> ! (More shameless funneling.)

Jennifer says

I heard about this book from my friend Emily's review. It was helpful to see how this author coped with being a new mom. And helped me to see that while I was pretty "rocked" by this motherhood thing, I was certainly not alone, and certainly facing challenges faced by many before me. It gave me some perspective.

Alison says

I wish I'd had this book before I was diagnosed with postpartum depression (PPD). She's intensely honest about how difficult the first months of motherhood were for her.

Bethany says

This book saved me. It should be a must read for anyone dealing with postpartum depression.

Sonya Feher says

This is a hard book to read, as Ingman warns in the introduction. She cops to the things no one ever shares, the fantasy of getting in the car and driving away so her husband and child can lead their lives together while she gets alone time, uninterrupted time, her life back. Her PPD and descriptions of it offer something Brooke Shields' memoir didn't come close to, what it's like to be a new mom with money concerns, comparing one's parenting choices, after-baby weight and image, struggles with the day to day of parenting; what happens to marriage; parenting styles and pressure to parent in certain ways. She's angry, hipper than she thinks, irreverent, and her music references throughout the book offer a soundtrack to her suffering, her humor, and to her development as a parent making peace with what it means to have a child, to have her particular child – the kind that has allergies and cries a lot, the one that doesn't sleep and has colic, that wants mommy when mommy most needs a break.

Sara says

Brutally honest book about post-partum depression and the struggle to be healthy while caring for an infant. I so appreciated her telling me plainly - it's normal to feel exhausted and bored and overwhelmed... living with young kids is crazy-making. It's a lie that "love is enough" to make a parent feel happy all the time, especially if you're the primary caregiver for the kid/s. Ingman "majors on the majors" - be kind to yourself and to other moms, don't freak out over non-essentials.

maxnbigboy says

I read a excerpt from this book and was so offended by the language and authors attitude towards her child that I did not read the book and will not recommend it to anyone. I understand that postpartum depression is an awful disease, but this little child will grow up to read these horrible thoughts from his mother. It was not humorous to me at all.

Susan Bazzett-Griffith says

I thoroughly enjoyed this confessional memoir about Marrit Ingman's first 18 months of motherhood. She pulls no punches and gives voice to even the most taboo of thoughts associated with postpartum depression and psychosis. Her writing is lovely and lyrical at points and straightforward and concise at others. Four stars.

Nancy says

This is the book that should be required reading for those thinking of having a baby. This exposes all of the stuff that "they" don't tell you when you bring the baby home from the hospital...the colic, the exploding diapers, the allergies, but most of all the post-partum depression. Mrs. Ingman writes that "sometimes it's enough that everyone is alive at the end of the day". I found myself empathizing with the writer, as someone who has seen some pretty dark days herself. While she takes on some pretty hard issues, she still maintains a sharp wit which made this book enjoyable.

Emily Childs says

Thanks to Ms. Ingman for writing this book. It really gave me a sense of perspective about my own first year as a mother. Loved the title of the chapter that started with, "Fuck Dr. Sears". Hell yes! Also could really relate to the whole "slightly older parent-to-be overachiever seeks to learn all from books and master this parenting thing lickety split" thing she had going on. Very risky to do, indeed! I certainly go my own come-uppance! Entertaining, easy to read, and gives you a mission to seek out other parents, help them along, and to stop labeling yourselves and others so much. Right on! Also, gave me more information on PPD and famous cases of PPD and how badly the news media mischaracterized them...helped along by how judgemental our society is towards mothers who need some help.

julie says

Not a fun read, but a glimpse at depression, at myself, and a bit of social discourse on the state of motherhood in America thrown in for good measure. It was normalizing to see that my scary thoughts looked just like someone else's scary thoughts from time to time.

Allison says

I think most mothers probably can relate to something in this book. To be sure, most of us are not having suicidal fantasies throughout the entirety of our child's infancy, but then most of us don't have reflux, multi-allergic babies who cry and cry and cry.

Even as something of an "attachment" parent herself, the author has a pretty scathing review of the Dr Sears

books, and actually the whole "parenting" genre. People put so much pressure on themselves to do things the "right" way and are so judgemental of others - as if there's one perfect right way to raise a child.

The book definitely makes me realize I should really be reaching out to other moms more. Motherhood can indeed be a weirdly isolating experience, and moms judge each other horribly; something I have definitely been working on.

Crystal says

This book was amazing. She is a great writer, and so very brave a raw to share her experiences with becoming a new mom who had a difficult baby (colic/reflux/food allergies/eczema) that contributed to her postpartum depression and intrusive thoughts. Written in essay format, there are times you laugh, and time you nod your head in recognition (or at least I did). Loved it.

Molly says

I need books like this to make me feel like I did not exit the land of the sane. Or at least that I can re-enter if I did.

Andy says

Full Disclosure Disclaimer: The author is a family friend and she gives my wife and I a shout-out in the intro. And she has a great chapter that makes my wife sound like the supercool woman she is.

BUT EVEN if she didn't, this book is great. This book details the author's very difficult post-birth experiences with her chronically ill infant and severe post-partum depression. The topics may not sound like fun, but Marrit has such a good sense of humor and is such a good writer that she makes it an enjoyable and engaging read. Check it out - you can read some excerpts online free here:

<http://www.marrit.info/excerpt.html>
