



How to Build a Fire: And Other Handy Things Your Grandfather Knew

Erin Bried

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A HANDY GUIDE FULL OF HOW-TO TIPS AND SAGE ADVICE FROM GRANDFATHERS

As members of the Greatest Generation, our grandfathers were not only defined by the Depression but also by their heroic service to the country in World War II. Courageous, responsible, and involved, they understand sacrifice, hard work, and how to do whatever is necessary to take care of their loved ones. They also know how to have a rollicking good time.

Sensible, fun, and inspiring, *How to Build a Fire* offers a rare glimpse into the hearts and minds of grandfathers near and far by sharing their practical skills and sweet stories on how to be stronger, smarter, richer, and happier. Inside are more than one hundred essential step-by-step tips for fixing, leading, prospering, playing, and hosting, including how to

- buck up and be brave in the face of adversity
- play hard and break in a baseball mitt
- bait a hook and catch a big fish
- look dapper and tie a perfect tie
- get a raise and earn more
- write a love letter and kindle romance
- change a flat tire and save the day
- stand up and give a sparkling toast
- play the harmonica and make your own music

Loaded with charming illustrations, good humor, and warm nostalgia, *How to Build a Fire* is the perfect handbook for guys or gals of any age. The first of its kind, this collection of our grandfathers' hard-earned wisdom will help you build confidence and get back to what's really important in life.

How to Build a Fire: And Other Handy Things Your Grandfather Knew Details

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Manda says

Nomadic SA Chick's Book Reviews

Review

I have always been a tomboy, playing in the dirt, climbing corn cribs, and running through the pastures. Growing up, I was happy to hang out with father and grandfather in the fields or in the tractors. Following them around as they did chores and helping them out however I could. I also played with my Barbies, and they helped out on the farm as well. Some days, my dolls came home dirtier than I did. My mom wasn't as thrilled about this as I was, but I think she handled it pretty well.

I went into this book not knowing what to expect. I thought the two most important men in my life had taught me everything I would ever need to know, that my mother, grandmother, and instructors could not teach me. There were a lot of things in this book I am grateful for already knowing how to do, like how to build a fire, how to change a tire, and how to bait a hook, but there are things that nobody ever taught me, and I never even thought about it before, like how to negotiate a raise. I semi-successfully navigated that for the first time a few months before reading the book. I say semi-successfully because while I did not get exactly what I wanted in wanting, I did not walk away empty handed. After reading the book, I learned where my pitfalls were, and what I can do differently next time.

For me, there were several things in this book that I will most likely never need to know how to do, like how to shave my face (I really hope I never need to know how to do that!), or how to look dapper in a tie, though I think it would be slightly romantic to be able to tie a man's tie for him. Even the things that I realized I would probably never need to know how to do, I was fascinated to read about how to do them. What I really enjoyed about this book was how it was written. There were several grandfatherly men who wrote each advice article and instilled his years of wisdom into the reader. It was like reading a journal from my own grandfather who had left me instructions for life.

It wasn't until I was older, a senior in college not too long ago, that I realized how much my father and grandfather taught me out in those fields, and how much I still have left to learn from them. Unfortunately this was just two years after my grandfather had passed away, but fortunately I still have my father around. While this book didn't have a lot of new information for me, I still really enjoyed every aspect of it, even the bits I felt were not as relevant to my life. This is an all around handy little guide that I plan to keep in my personal library. It is a book that I would give out to any young teen, male or female, in a life skills class, and tell them they will learn more from this book than they will learn from baking cookies in HomeEc.

Ratings (based on a 10 point scale)

Quality of Writing - 9

Pace - 5

Plot Development - N/A

Characters - N/A

Enjoyability - 9

Insightfulness - 8

Ease of Reading - 8

Photos/Illustrations - N/A

Overall Rating - 4 out of 5 stars

Kayla says

I read this after reading "how to sew a button" - the version of this book for females- and found this version extremely offensive. Maybe I should have found the other one offensive.

The male version contains all kinds of useful information about how to do well at work, how to provide for your family, how to be a role model, etc.

The female version contains tips and tricks on cleaning your house, saving money, and hosting parties.

I found the male version more applicable and useful to my life as a modern female with a job and financial responsibilities -- please don't give your daughter the female version of this book unless you don't think she's very capable.

I should have seen this coming after seeing that the biographies of the "grandfathers" are 3x as long as the "grandmothers".

These books enforce unfortunate stereotypes - don't force your children into these pigeon holes.

Margie says

Covers a lot of subjects, though it could have gone more in-depth with any of them. Good enough that I'm considering buying a copy for a certain nephew about to start college.

Emily says

A good read for those wanting to brush up on some essential, time-honed skills. A fun read.

Jane says

Bried's book charmingly takes us into the lives of ten men from the greatest generation to share their insight and wisdom on varying topics such as how to hold a baby and how to hold onto your sweetheart with the current generation. Each lesson begins with a quote from one of these men and is approximately two pages, which makes it a quick read, and in some cases there are some illustrations to help with step-by-step instructions. One of the most fascinating items in the book is a history of the meaning of flowers from the Victorian era, which lends itself to being a practical lesson. While this is a must read for all young men before they enter adulthood, nothing replaces the personal connection between a grandfather and his grandchild.

Corene says

I thought this book had the potential to be a good gift idea, but it is really only okay. YouTube videos are probably a better way to learn many of the skills here.

Cindy says

Stuff everyone should know.

Kathleen says

Handy, indeed, and fun to read; I never intended to actually finish it, it was brought home from the library by somebody else and found its way into my hands. The actual grandfatherly advice takes the form of a short quote at the start of each instruction whether it be for consoling a loved one or shopping for a car. I'll be looking for the grandmother version and intend to read that as well. This would make a decent gift for just about anyone.

Kristi says

This has information on just about EVERYTHING!! While it does seem to be slanted towards males, the skills inside the book are definitely ones everyone should know (changing a tire, buying meat, starting a fire, etc.). This is a book I come back to again and again to learn/remember new skills. Plus, its humorous and sarcastic in many places (as well as simplistic)!

Weston says

I didn't read the entire thing, as it isn't so much a 'read through' type book. But I skimmed through most of it, and read the portions that I considered interesting / useful. I think it will be a good reference book though.

Daniel Stern says

This is a fun little reference book for men and women alike. Great, short how-to explanations on topics that you might talk with your grandfather about as you are growing up or as an adult. They are simple and presented in steps that are concise, informative, and entertaining. If you only have one reference book on your book shelf, I highly recommend this one and its companion "How to Sew on a Button". I also recommend it for those of us who have more books than sense, and those who have forgotten how satisfying it is to deal with things directly and efficiently.

Brianne says

I really think that every teenage male (or, heck, female) should be given this book upon hitting puberty. This stuff should be taught in a high school class. Some of the advice is a tad bit clichéd, kind of "Well, duh" instead of any real insider advice or anything in-depth, but it's a great starter skill set for the well-rounded young man.

Stacy says

If Tom Brokaw's The Greatest Generation and the Boy Scout Handbook had a baby, it would be this book. Nice grandfathers, simple advice from their lives and some humor that just tried too hard. Cute book to read while waiting at appointments or while killing time at an airport but nothing you would buy with intentions to use as an advice book.

Jessica Moore says

This was a fun quick read. I learned a few things, I laughed a few times. A book I might buy to have for those "just in case" moments I could reference it.

Gospodyina says

Since I read it at the gym, I can confidently state it took less than 4 hours to read: two on a recumbent bike, less than two on a treadmill.

It's cute. The task-based how-tos are quite brief, obviously, since it's possible to write an entire book about any one of them, but the more esoteric how-tos were the ones I really enjoyed: how to be a friend, apologize, be brave, etc.

I'm interested in reading the other one, How to Sew a Button, and I suspect both would be suitable gifts for teens. Ha! Now that I think of it, they'd be ideal gifts for bar mitzvahs.
