



## **A Decade of Hope: Stories of Grief and Endurance from 9/11 Families and Friends**

*Dennis Smith*

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**On the tenth anniversary of 9/11, a portrait of tragedy, survival, and healing from the author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Report from Ground Zero*.** This year marks the tenth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, an occasion that is sure to be observed around the world. But among the memorials, political speeches, and news editorials, the most pressing consideration- and often the most overlooked-is the lives and well-being of the 9/11 first responders, their families, and the victims' families over the past decade.

Dennis Smith, a former firefighter and the author of the bestselling *Report from Ground Zero*, addresses this important topic in a series of interviews with the heroes and families of those most affected by the tragedy either through feats of bravery in the rescue efforts or heroic bearing up in the face of unimaginable loss. Smith provides an intimate look at a terrible moment in history and its challenging and difficult aftermath, allowing these survivors to share their stories of loss, endurance, and resilience in their own words. *A Decade of Hope* is an honest and vitally important look at a decade in the lives of those for whom a national tragedy was a devastatingly personal ordeal.

## A Decade of Hope: Stories of Grief and Endurance from 9/11 Families and Friends Details

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## **From Reader Review A Decade of Hope: Stories of Grief and Endurance from 9/11 Families and Friends for online ebook**

### **Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says**

I don't think it is possible or even appropriate to do a standard review of a book like this. While so many of us lived through the shock and chaos of that day, 9/11 families are on a whole different level. Who are we to judge them for their thoughts, ideas, opinions, over fifteen years later? They will live with this loss for the rest of their lives, that gaping hole left my mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, sisters, brothers, who never came home. Writing is cathartic, and getting a loved-one's story out, to keep their name and memory alive, is a noble thing. Reliving that day is always hard, but books like this are important. We can't be complacent, we have to remember what it was like that day and hopefully learn from it, continue to learn from it, so that it never happens again.

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### **Kathryn says**

Overall, I really enjoyed this book, even considering the subject matter. It contained the personal stories of 20+ people, who lost family members and friends in 9-11. They were from all walks of life, some lost firefighters, policemen, employees from companies in the World Trade Center. Although there was lots of grief in every story, it was nice to see how so many people overcame their total grief and did good in the wake of their loss of their loved ones by creating foundations and/or other charitable causes in order to honor the memory of their loved ones. All the stories in this book centered on victims from the World Trade Center, I would have liked to see more variety, since there were also those who died in Washington DC at the attack on the Pentagon, as well as on the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania.

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### **Susan Wright says**

Tear inducing account of just a few of the thousands of lives impacted by 9/11. Stories of love, survival, grief, and giving back abound. Be prepared to take lots of notes and to do continued research and learning the charities and policies discussed throughout the accounts.

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### **Scott L. says**

Interesting to read some of the stories and backgrounds of the 9/11 survivors - yet this book seems to be less compelling than Report from Engine Co. 82 or Report from Ground Zero. Dennis Smith is much better when he is personally involved in what he is writing; he seems more distant and quite removed from the story here. While I understand that he was trying to tell many viewpoints, this book seems very uneven and is a hit-and-miss. I would have much preferred his writing in the first person as to his involvement with these families, instead of removing himself entirely. Readable, but not one of his greater books.

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### **Kristen says**

For the last couple of weeks I have been reading this book: A Decade of Hope: Stories of Grief and Endurance from 9/11 Families and Friends. I didn't cry during but with every story my heart swelled up and bled for the 2,974 people, including the 343 firefighters that were lost that day. I did feel like I was there on September 11, 2001, but yet can't possibly in my lifetime been there and know how it felt. I do really wish that I was able to remember all the stories word for word but I can't, but I can remember pieces of each one. From the planes hitting the World Trade Center, to rescuing, to the families waiting for news, to the funerals, how the families coped and did what they could to keep their loved one's memory alive, to the politics, to the blame and conspiracy theories of the dark Tuesday day. A must read for those who are interested knowing more about September 11, 2001 and doing a little history.

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### **Stephanie Phipps says**

This is the stories of the dead from 9/11, in their own words. Seeing the stories of the loved and lost is important. Unless we wish to sacrifice more of our innocent countrymen and women. It also forces you to see and understand issues mistakes made that fateful day. In my opinion from reading tons about 9/11, one of the biggest errors was telling people in the other trade center buildings to stay put. Another was getting communication to and from rescue personnel. Simple things like stairwells people used to get out, could have ultimately saved lives. I know hindsight is 20/20 but I pray we learn from this without further sacrifice of lives.

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### **Rebecca says**

Like another review said, this should be required reading for high school students as it gives a glimpse into how 9/11 impacted thousands of families, friends, and acquaintances of those killed in the terrorist attacks. We were all impacted by the attacks, but I don't think we can understand the extent of that day and its aftermath that those who were directly impacted have to live with for the rest of their lives.

It is a very difficult book to read as every story is heartbreakingly, absolutely heartbreakingly.

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### **Judee says**

This book should be required reading for all Americans. It should be read by every high school student. I don't read much nonfiction. For unknown reasons, I downloaded this from our library onto my NOOK e reader. I was late getting started on it in the two week lending time so I wasn't finished when it expired. I then went and got the hard copy at the library. I have passed it to my husband to read. When the paperback comes out, I will buy copies for our sons.

9/11 was distant to us who live on the other side of the continent. I didn't read many of the detailed accounts of this horrific event until this book. It is compelling and enlightening to read these first person stories from family members of people who were lost that day. As Americans we need to heed their words.

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### **John says**

The book is full of emotion and intrigue. The author interviews several family members of our fallen heroes from the NYFD (343 heroes); NYPD and Port Authority officers who unselfishly sacrificed themselves that fateful day when we were ATTACKED BY TERRORISTS. Like many family members in the book I am outraged by the television coverage portraying that day and its aftermath as a time of reflection and healing. Although that is what naturally comes with time I know that family members are still upset and hurt by the events that have taken place since the attack. For example not allowing any of the gruesomeness of that day above ground for all to see but literally burying that day in the basement of the memorial library. I hope everyone who visits ground zero will reflect on everything that was done there. Like the Holocaust Museum its not a fun filled day to visit the museum and look at man's inhumanity to man but it is necessary. We must do the same with 9-11 and take in all that their is to remember or those fallen heroes did truly die in vain.

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### **Julie says**

A decade after 9/11 the author Dennis Smith talks to a variety of people whose lives were changed forever. From police and fireman who were there at ground zero, to people who escaped the tower, parents, husbands and wives of those who died, a sister of the pilot who crashed into the pentagon and first responders who rushed to the scene.

We all know a lot of the stories, the ones that tragically died and the ones that survived. It was an interesting reflection, as after this time period the grieving for those lost has changed and for many there is a distinction between people being killed vs them being murdered, who should be considered heroes and more interesting I thought was how the survivors think we should deal with terrorism in a modern world.

It did bring tears to my eyes several times, thinking of how awful it must have been for those people who died in the towers and how hard it was for the families who were left behind, and how confusing it was for them in the days following the disaster.

In this book, and in all the books I have read on the subject you do have to admire the courage and bravery of the fire and police who went towards the towers, to try and help to rescue people - awe inspiring.

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### **Megan Deppe says**

The most interesting thing about all of these stories is learning about how differently they affected the people telling them. Some people know (in almost excruciating detail) about their loved ones' last moments in the Towers, and some only know that they were there. Some are still in so much pain, some have begun the slow process of healing. Some are full-on activists fighting for or against the current world, and some are just trying to find a new normal. Some blame the religion, some only blame al-Qaeda. The only common thread is the grief, but it's expressed in such different ways. This book, told from the eyes of some of the people who were closest to 9/11 (whether they were actually at Ground Zero or just loved someone who was) shows how many different ways there are to think and feel about what happened that day, what lead up to it, and where our country is (at the time of writing the book). For someone like me, who was too young to really

understand what was happening that day, and who doesn't know much about it other than the bare bones all these years later, it's a way to understand more sides of the issues that caused and were created. I learned - and, in the end, that's what you should do, because if we want to try and keep what happened to all these people from happening again, we need to learn.

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### **Kristine (The Writer's Inkwell) says**

Review was originally posted on The Writer's Inkwell

The day of September 11, 2001 has been forever engraved into my memory. Although I lived across the country, I remember first hearing about the first airplane strike as I drove home that morning. My mother and I sat quietly and watched the news coverage. I remember seeing how much the towers were swaying from the impact and I warned my mother that they were not going to remain standing. None of us were prepared for the events that transpired that tragic day, but it resonated with me, as it did with all of us, in a profound way. Over the years I have read many of the stories of those who survived that day and some of the families who were trying to piece together their loved ones last moments.

This book was difficult to read at times. The stories that emerged left me in tears and at times outraged. My anger was at those who caused the deaths of so many people, but at times, it was also at the statements in the book, especially in regards to villainizing an entire religion. I know this is a strong area of debate among a lot of people, and I don't want to get into all of that. But one of the stories is about a young man who was of a Muslim faith and he had been a NYPD recruit. He ran away from his car and into one of the buildings to help people. He gave up his life and his family was accused of being traitors and called him a terrorist. His legacy was also disgraced because he is not listed as a first responder, despite the fact he was one. It's stories of willful ignorance and discrimination that left me angry and ashamed of how easily we can clump people under one category. For me, his story should serve to help us learn to stop blaming everyone for the actions of just a few.

This is a powerful book and many of the reflections from the survivors or the families may differ from your own. But I do feel that their stories are valid and deserve to be told. The memory of all the victims who lost their lives that day should be honored, regardless of their religious beliefs. If you choose to read this book (and I hope you do) prepare yourself, because it's a hard journey and it's never easy to read about tragedies such as this.

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### **Joe McDonald says**

This is such a powerful book! It shows us that through horrible loss individuals can gain strength and be called to do wonderous things! 9/11 was such a dark day in this country's history and to hear how these men and women got through the pain of losing loved ones to terrorists is both saddening and uplifting at the same time. I wish all those who lost someone that day peace and comfort throughout the remainder of their lives! Thank you for sharing your sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, husbands, and wives with us and may God grant you strength and love.

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## **Cinnapatty says**

This was by and far THE most difficult book I have ever read. I was looking for "Firefighters: Their Lives in Their Own Words" by this author as I had seen it when shelving and thought it looked interesting. Our public library doesn't have that book, but it had this one so I go it. It is exactly what the subtitles say it is. Stories of grief and endurance from 9/11 families and friends. And they are not easy stories to read. It is not something you can sit and read straight through. It took me a very very long time because I'd need at least a day or so to process and assimilate the one person's account I had just read before forging on to the next.

There are things I did not know about 9/11 that I learned in this book. Horrifying, graphic, non sugar coated things that are so disturbing and to think these families had to deal with that. Things like over 2700 people died that day and over 1200 were never found. Not even a single piece of them. Nothing. Of those 2700, only 174 were found intact. That is chilling. All those others only got bits and pieces of their loved ones back as they were identified using DNA. But over 1200, still nothing. Nothing.

This book was published five years ago so some of the topics brought up are not relevant anymore. At that time there was still debate about the Muslim Mosque projected to be built at Ground Zero. That never went through.

These accounts are raw. They are real. They will pierce you to the very core. You will cry. You will learn what is most important to each person and what they chose to focus on in the after math and up through 2011. The strength and grit and determination is inspiring. One topic that I believe ALL of them touched on (there are 25 accounts) is that we must really never forget in the sense that we must continue to educate our children about that day. They must be wiser than we were and more prepared. The gravity and scope of depth of loss on that single day is mind boggling. And many more have died since due to illness related to breathing that air and other physical ailments associated with that traumatic event.

One thing I wished I'd known when I started the book was that there are pictures in the back so you can put a face to the name of the person who is telling their account, or of their loved one of whom they're speaking. There are also several 9/11 tribute organizations listed in the back after the pictures.

I have never been to NYC. I hope to someday visit and particularly to visit Ground Zero and take a tour and remember these individuals whose stories I read. Over 2700 lost that day and I could barely get through 25 accounts. God bless all those affected that day. We who are distanced may remember but those who experienced this first hand will never forget and think about it every single day of their lives.

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## **Gina says**

Wow. Very powerful. I loved the different perspectives that were represented. It's interesting to see how some people are still very angry about what happened and dwell on that, and how others use the loss in their life to make positive changes in their community/world. I hope that the author writes another book about these people in ten years...it'd be interesting to see where they are at that time.

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