



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

Jane Isay

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On giving advice:

They Don't Want It.

They Don't Hear It.

They Resent It.

Don't Give It.

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.

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

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Author : Jane Isay

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From Reader Review Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship Between Adult Children and Parents for online ebook

Julene says

Good for parents that don't have good boundaries.

Peggy Best says

Interesting

The book is an easy read about how families have kept good relationships between parents and their grown children. Having grown children myself I found the book interesting.

Robin says

Very repetitive. I took away just a few pointers for myself.

Anne-Marie says

I bought this for my mother for Christmas but I wanted to read it first in case it gave advice I didn't care for. First of all, I got a little pizza sauce on it and I'm pretty sure that my mom will find that distasteful. Second of all, this book is pretty much everything I've ever wanted to tell my mother but have never been able to because of our fragile relationship. She has actually used the words "Walking on eggshells" around me in an email so the title is quite apro pro. Isay gives numerous examples of different families and their "situations" all of which discourage parents to not judge their adult children, not to give unsolicited advice to their adult children, not to come into their adult children's home and clean up their grandson's room and tell their adult children that their house looks like white trash. Okay, that last one was specific to MY mother but this book is either going to really improve our relationship or end it. Anyway, I'm hoping for the former.

Rebecca says

The author aims this book toward baby-boomer parents, yet I originally thought that the title applied to me, the "Adult Child" in the equation. Overall, I found the book mildly helpful, too depressing to read in one sitting (reading about all those dysfunctional families really wears a person down!), and a mite repetitive while leaving out some important elements of an adult child's perspective.

The best nugget from this book is what makes a parent / adult child relationship so treacherous that we have to "walk on eggshells" so much more than we must with a partner or a friend. It lies in a child's memory of the discipline and boundaries -- parental control -- every parent exerts in an effort to rear their children.

When children gain independence, it's difficult to feel boxed in by such control. The author writes,

"Grown children have a hard time knowing the difference between an innocent remark and parental control. If we offer to help them buy a car or a house and make comments about their decisions, they get furious. We get hurt -- after all, we were just trying to be helpful, and we didn't mean to criticize. The problem is that such words bring back the rage that a daughter felt when when she wasn't allowed to wear her favorite Goth outfit to a family bat mitzvah or the fury a son felt when he was kept home from a football game to write a term paper. This type of discipline was part and parcel of our unending effort to form them into acceptable members of society. In general, they are grateful to us for helping them grow into the people they are today, but the slightest reminder of the old days, when we exerted power over them, incites them to rebel, refuse, and finally repudiate." (pp. 97-98).

This passage encapsulates the author's main message: "Listening to frown children talk about their parents, I learned how deeply they love us and how desperately they want us to grow and change as they do. They want to be close, but they are exquisitely sensitive to any perceived or real assault on their autonomy and boundaries. Only when they trust that we respect them as adults can they feel free to return to the family." (p. xii-xiii).

"[O:]ur children are exquisitely sensitive to us. I have been amazed by how little it takes to break down the barriers between parent and child . . . and how little it takes to improve the relationship with our grown children. We don't have to remake ourselves; we just have to listen to them and be mindful of what they are living through and adjust our behavior to that. We have to treat them like the adults they are. We have to give up the past, so that they can do the same" (p. 56).

Sarah says

This book is full of anecdotes, but I didn't find it particularly helpful in addressing the situations that the author shared.

D O says

Without giving away any spoilers, I feel like this book would be beneficial to most people with grown children. So many different scenarios are given that I feel like it is highly relatable. I was impressed with the advice given. The hardest part was concentrating on the characters. I like to read a book in one or two sittings, and each chapter had multiple stories, each time with new characters, so I got bogged down in names and not letting my mind wander back to a previous story. I think if you read this book, you might even save yourself some counseling! Maybe this book will save or revive a lot of relationships. I like to think of it as "It ain't over until the fat lady sings." Basically, if your loved ones are still alive, there is always hope. This book brought me a lot of personal peace and insight. I HIGHLY recommend it, even if your relationship is perfect. This may ward off problems, or it may help you to have peace of mind to work toward resolving them.

Ceciliahill55 says

Interesting book on the relationship between adult children and parents. I could empathize and understand many of the situations described in the book. It didn't give me any answers, but made me realize some of the issues I am presented with are common among many parents while dealing with their adult children.

Caren says

The best book I've read for Parents of Adult children.

Leanne says

Numerous true stories of "walking on eggshells" with your adult children and not enough specific ideas on how to navigate "the delicate relationship between adult children and parents." Helpful if you don't want to feel alone in your journey.

Brittnee says

This is more of a collection of stories than anything else. No analyses and no real meaningful advice is offered.

Cara Lembo says

Anyone can benefit from this book, now matter how "Happy a family" or home-life you have. I refer to it often as one of my pack of lifesavers.

Mckinley says

From parent side. Editor collected stories, including her own. No analyses.
Seems there are 2 camps on this topic, one from the parent perspective regarding current relationship status and the other from the adult child exploring putting their parents in a facility of some sort.

Linda Dunn says

Incredible book on relationships with your adult children. Jane Isay has a way of making you think outside the box with understanding and compassion. She gives examples through interviews. I highly recommend Walking on Eggshells whether you are having difficulties or not.

Taylor says

I don't have a shelf for self-help, given that I almost never read it. This book was recommended to me by a counselor, and I actually did find it helpful. It is written from the perspective of parent wanting to improve their relationship with adult children. At first I thought that perspective might make it hard for me to get into, but it was quite the opposite. I have no way of imagining what is going on in a parent's head when thinking of adult children (given that my child is only 2) and it was nice to have that window opened. Now I feel that my perspective is better - I understand more fully what is going on in those parental heads when there is conflict.

Beyond that, it gave me a lot to think about as I nurture and grow with my little guy. Good thoughts - realizing the things I can do as he matures to help evolve our relationship into a healthy adult relationship.

And beyond THAT, it made me deeply appreciate MY parents, who have really worked quite hard to be good companions and support-people for my siblings and me. They have (with many speed bumps) allowed us to grow up and pursue our own lives in ways that are so loving and respectful that all four of us LOVE spending time with them. I'm counting my blessings.
