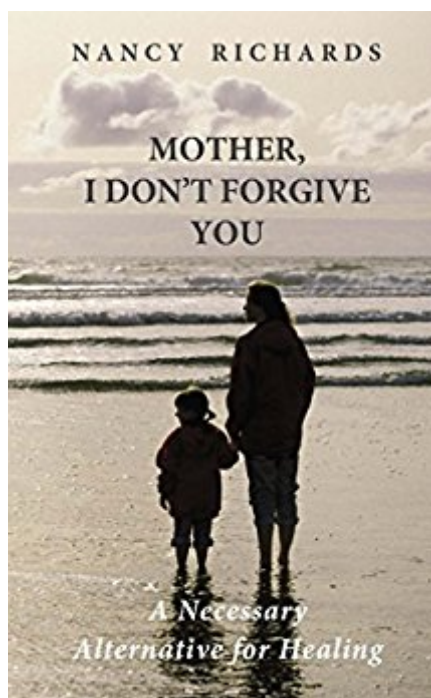


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Mother, I Don't Forgive You: A Necessary Alternative For Healing



Synopsis

After the death of her father, and her mother's immediate remarriage to a sadistic abuser, Nancy Richards lived a life plagued with physical and emotional violence. The powerlessness, pain, and torment she endured ate her up. But, the ultimate gut-punch came when she finally mustered the courage to break her silence, and her words were met with excuses for her abusers, and the admonition that she must forgive. *Mother, I Don't Forgive You* is a true story of terrifying abuse, and the triumph of healing. Written with raw emotion and inspirational clarity, this page-turner offers help and hope for anyone who has suffered from abuse, or loves someone who has suffered from abuse.

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Customer Reviews

Mother, I Don't Forgive You is the best book I've read in a very long time. As the director of Luke 17:3 Ministries for adult children of abusive, controlling or abandoning birth-families, I would be hard-pressed to come up with a more helpful book to recommend. It is unique in its perspective in

that it teaches the reader that sometimes it is okay, and even necessary, NOT to forgive. It is a page turner right from the beginning, gripping you with Nancy Richards' riveting and disturbing story of her sadistic stepfather's violence and relentless abuse of herself and her brothers, and her mother's complicity in the abuse and complete refusal to protect her children in the slightest way. Even more distressing is the author's account of her attempts to protect herself and her brothers, and to stand up and speak the truth about the abuse, which resulted in her treacherous mother convincing anyone who would listen that she was a liar and troublemaker with mental problems. There is a twisted episode in which her stepfather was finally going to move out, but her mother told the then 12-year old author to ask him to stay. He did stay, and years later the mother blamed her daughter for controlling her marriage (at age 12!) and making her husband stay when she could have been rid of him sooner. Long after the evil stepfather was gone and the author was grown, her mother continued to expose the author's younger brothers to repeated abuse from a string of other losers she became involved with. Nancy Richards tells, in heart-wrenching detail, of her attempts to protect her younger siblings, to get anyone to listen to her or believe her, and to somehow maintain a relationship with the mother she still loved and the rest of her family. But, in a scenario disturbingly familiar to many abuse survivors, her mother managed to convince most of the family that Richards was the problem, and to turn almost her entire family against her, including the brothers she had tried so hard and sacrificed so much to protect. The denial, betrayals, and blatant lies as the family protected the abusers and scape-goated the author will ring true with so many of us. And then the author was left to embark on the path to forgiveness, with absolutely no remorse or repentance from those she was pressured to forgive, and not even any validation of her traumatic experiences. At each stage of the process, she faced renewed pain with every new revelation, such as the realizations that her mother was the one who betrayed her the most, and that her mother really never loved her. Throughout her long and difficult journey to forgiveness and recovery, the author has many valuable insights which she lovingly shares with us. The most important insight, which is the main premise of the book, is that healing needs to come FIRST, BEFORE forgiveness. We usually feel pressured to forgive prematurely, by family and friends, therapists, and society in general. But forced forgiveness is not always possible, and is certainly not healthy. The author teaches us that forgiveness is a process that begins with healing, and needs to include other elements as well, such as validation, anger, grief, and protection. In the process of her recovery, Nancy Richards read other author's works, which helped her to understand these truths about forgiveness, and she quotes from them in her book. When reading *Mother, I Don't Forgive You*, one gets the sense that the author is not just writing about her own experiences, but is doing all she can

to present a well-rounded and informed picture that will help other abuse victims as much as possible. She opens her heart to us, and shares her innermost thoughts and every feeling she has that might validate our own feelings and help us on our road to recovery. The book is an easy read, and I was able to finish it in a few sittings. It was a hard book to put down, and I hated to walk away from it in the middle of the story without finding out what was going to happen next. It was a lot of food for thought. Nancy Richards does all abuse victims a favor when she teaches us that sometimes no matter what we are willing to do and how hard we are willing to try, it is just not possible to have a relationship with some people. We understand how important it is to stand up and tell the truth- to others and to ourselves. When we realize that someone we love doesn't love us, the truth can be so hard to bear, but it is still the truth, and denying it doesn't change anything. We learn that sometimes we need to make the choice to walk away from a toxic relationship. We feel validated in learning that it is alright NOT TO FORGIVE evil people, and that releasing ourselves from the pressure to forgive gives us the freedom to heal. Only after we have healed will we be able to come to a place of genuine forgiveness. After reading *Mother, I Don't Forgive You*, I admire Nancy Richards for her courage and determination to heal and lead a life of peace and happiness despite her birth-family's rejection, and I am appreciative of her sincere efforts to encourage the rest of us and validate our experiences by sharing her story. Her triumph over the devastation and heartache inflicted by those she loved is an inspiration to anyone who thinks they can never get over the pain and be happy again. I urge all those who have felt the knife of a loved one's betrayal in their back, or who feel pressured to forgive before they are ready, to read this book. It is a must-read for any survivor of birth-family abuse.

"I left Mom's house stripped, whipped, naked, and destroyed." *Mother, I Don't Forgive You* is the author's potent account of the raw abusive underbelly of human nature and the triumph over it. Thinking about child abuse puts most people in an uncomfortable zone yet many people are abusive without realizing it. Telltale signs of abuse are being uncovered daily. Healing from abuse is walking a complicated grief path of multiples losses. Working through the trauma takes on a power. The power of healing is the ability to reshape your life. The author courageously rips through the barriers of denial, leaving the crude truth exposed. Richards's gutsy mission of cleaning out the wounds of abuse and setting new boundaries is humbling. As the author searches through the rearview mirror of her life, she learns that healing first is the foundation for true forgiveness. The perfect punctuation mark to her lessons is the purging of the patterns of abuse. By shedding her layers of pain, anger and confusion, she transforms her life and the life of those she touches. This is

an excellent book for abuse survivors and for those dealing with or helping abuse survivors. Sherry Russell BCETS BCEBT

• Mother, I Don't Forgive You • by Nancy Richards My story was written on every page of Nancy Richards' book "Mother, I Don't Forgive You." This page-turner is inspiring, validating and wise. Her heartbreaking life story shows that forgiveness is not a single act but a life work that has many layers and many seasons. In sharing her recovery Richards offers a healing blueprint for physical and emotional abuse, a mother's lifelong rejection, and being viewed as an enemy by siblings. She shows how to move from her personal betrayal to the larger collective betrayal we all face. She illustrates how forced forgiveness and forgiveness in order to heal is shallow and does not last. We need to heal first in order to forgive. Forgiveness without healing is from a position of weakness. She says forgiveness is not a choice but a process that results from healing. Only when we work towards healing does forgiveness become a realistic goal. Richards chose to stop seeing her mother and take care of herself when her mother continued to heap contempt on her and be oblivious to her feelings. She said the act of not forgiving her mother liberated her from her abuse and set her free to forgive. She stated, "I never would have been able to forgive my mother if I still had a relationship with her." Her story shows how healing comes with self-preservation and self-compassion when we feel safe to acknowledge and talk about our injuries and begin to deal with the trauma. Richards said, "Each time I thought I had finished mourning, another wave of heart breaking losses emerged. However as I peeled away each layer of pain, I grew stronger."

It's heartbreaking what Nancy and her brothers went through, sad that since she was the one that finally strong enough to stand up for revenue they suffered that she basically shunned by her family. But she was strong enough to not only break the cycle of abuse but nice on with her life. A mother myself I can't for the life of me understand how a mother can stand by and watch her kids be abused and abuse them as well blaming Nancy & not owning up to her part in it , even her brothers and grandmother as well. My heart aches for all Nancy went thru and inspired by her courage. Thank you for sharing your story Nancy, it not only helped you but many others as well.

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