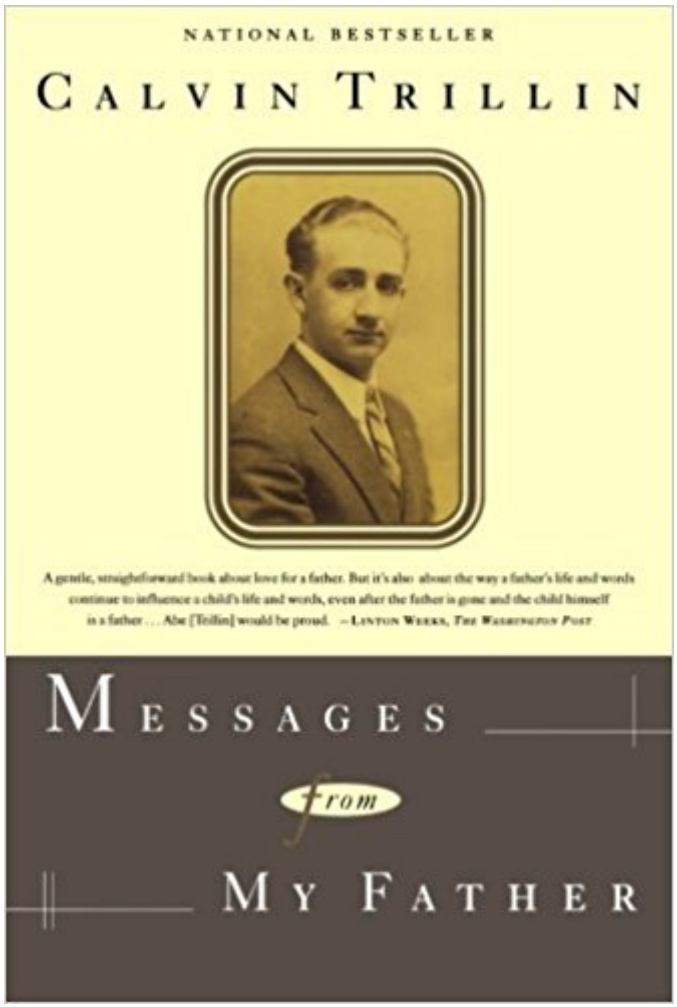
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Messages From My Father: A Memoir



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Synopsis

Calvin Trillin, the celebrated New Yorker writer, offers a rich and engaging biography of his father, as well as a literate and entertaining fanfare for the common (and decent, and hard-working) man.Abe Trillin had the western Missouri accent of someone who had grown up in St. Joseph and the dreams of America of someone who had been born is Russia. In Kansas City, he was a grocer, at least until he swore off the grocery business. He was given to swearing off thingsÃ¢â ¬â ¢coffee, tobacco, alcohol, all neckties that were not yellow in color. Presumably he had also sworn off swearing, although he was a collector of curses, such as "May you have an injury that is not covered by workman’s compensation." Although he had a strong vision of the sort of person he wanted his son to be, his explicit advice about how to behave didn’t go beyond an almost lackadaisical "You might as well be a mensch." Somehow, though, Abe Trillin’s messages got through clearly.The author’s unerring sense of the American character is everywhere apparent in this quietly powerful memoir, Messages from My Father.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The man was stubborn," writes Calvin Trillin -- the second most stubborn member of the Trillin family -- to begin this memoir of his father. Although he had a strong vision of the sort of person he wanted his son to be, Abe Trillin’s explicit advice about how to behave didn’t go beyond "You might as well be a mensch." Somehow, though, his messages got through clearly, and Calvin’s work is a credit to his father’s vision. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In his recent books Remembering Denny and Deadline Poet, Trillin included affectionate memories of his deceased father, a taciturn, stubbornly honest Kansas City grocer who wrote doggerel and planned for his son to go to Yale. This slim, charming memoir?a good chunk already appeared in the New Yorker?adds to that portrait. Abe Trillin, his son recalls, "did not make a strong first impression" on the world at large, but he quietly and wryly communicated bedrock values of modesty and responsibility. Abe eschewed luxury?"[m]y father had a strong sense of enoughness." He liked to collect Yiddish curses and yellow neckties. And while young Calvin thought his Midwestern youth was as American as possible, he now recognizes the effort of his father, who came to the U.S. from Ukraine at two. The author reflects that he's followed most of his father's messages, "with just a little light editing." And, he concludes poignantly, though some might look at Abe Trillin's life and deem him unfulfilled, "I'd like to believe that he thought more in terms of... a sense of continuity." Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a gentle and an introspective book that is easy to read. Trillin reflects on his father's positive impact on his mode of thinking from childhood to adulthood. His father's expression like, "You might as well be a mensch" carries the weight of wisdom that tends to stick around. He clearly inspired his son be a person of integrity. Parenting is difficult, and it appears that Trillin's father managed to balance just right on the tightrope between too much and too little of parenting -- just right -- and that's what good dads do. I know that mine does.

Calvin Trillin is a master story teller -- it's as if we had a one-to-one conversatoin, how wonderful.

Trillin gives us not only a valentine of his father but he does so without revealing any negativity -- he is able to see the man and his "agenda" without focusing on his own residue. This is an amazing feat considering how others have viewed the "agenda" of their fathers and how it cost them. One does not come across this graciousness frequently -- rarely is a better description.

A small, charming, lovable and wise book. I'm getting it for all my children for Christmas to help them discover how wonderful their own father was!

I just love the way Trillin writes. And I love the idea that Trillin's father sent him to Yale, so he wouldn't be a grocer like his old man.

Very clever writer.

A fine book for any man to read who is a: beyond forty five years old, b: has sons, c: possibly was brought up Jewish. All or some of the above would enjoy this book. I am reminded of my own father, his triumphs and shortcomings and Calvin's book is a must for any person who wants a quick fun read with interesting messages. I started it, and finished it the same morning! I could not put it down...

Beautiful.

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