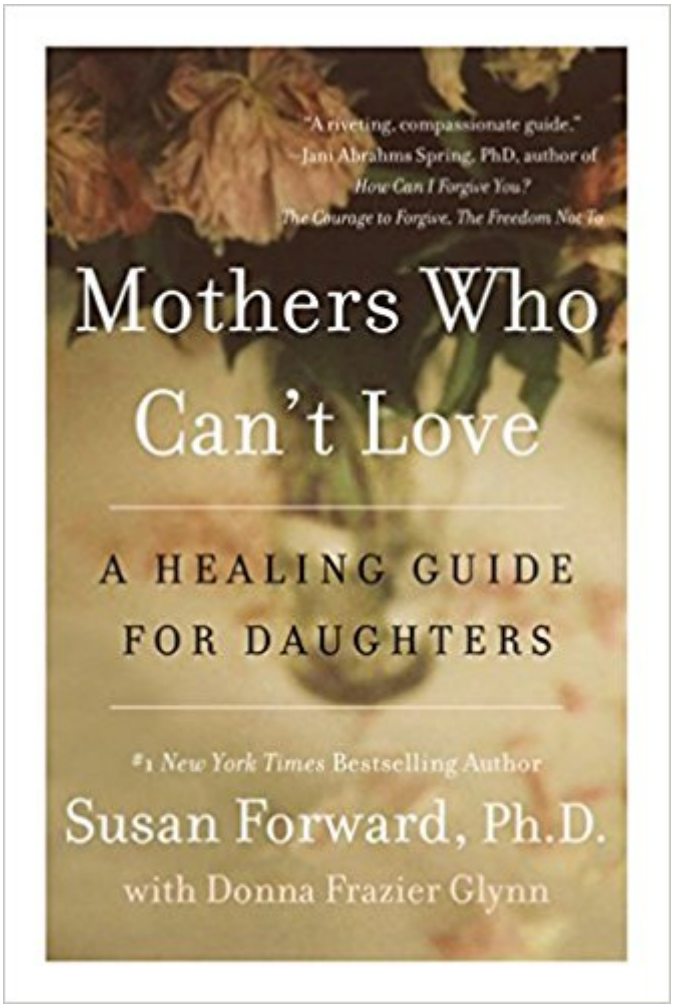
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Mothers Who Can't Love: A Healing Guide For Daughters



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Synopsis

With Mothers Who Can’t Love: A Healing Guide for Daughters, Susan Forward, Ph.D., author of the smash #1 bestseller Toxic Parents, offers a powerful look at the devastating impact unloving mothers have on their daughtersÃ¢â ¬â •and provides clear, effective techniques for overcoming that painful legacy.In more than 35 years as a therapist, Forward has worked with large numbers of women struggling to escape the emotional damage inflicted by the women who raised them. Subjected to years of criticism, competition, role-reversal, smothering control, emotional neglect and abuse, these women are plagued by anxiety and depression, relationship problems, lack of confidence and difficulties with trust. They doubt their worth, and even their ability to love.Forward examines the Narcissistic Mother, the Competitive Mother, the Overly Enmeshed mother, the Control Freak, Mothers who need Mothering, and mothers who abuse or fail to protect their daughters from abuse.Ã Â Filled with compelling case histories, Mothers Who CanÃ¢â ¬â„¢t Love outlines the self-help techniques Forward has developed to transform the lives of her clients, showing women how to overcome the pain of childhood and how to act in their own best interests.Ã Â Warm and compassionate, Mothers Who CanÃ¢â ¬â„¢t Love offers daughters the emotional support and tools they need to heal themselves and rebuild their confidence and self-respect.

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Customer Reviews

In this powerful guide, Forward (Toxic Parents) offers a lifeline for those who have suffered through

a dysfunctional relationship with a parent. After defining and describing the five most common types of abusive mothers (overly enmeshed; severely narcissistic; control freak; mothers who need mothering; and those who are physically and/or emotionally abusive) Forward gets to work showing adult daughters how to address the negative beliefs that grew from an unhealthy upbringing. With empathy, she assures those who suffer that the abuse is unequivocally not their fault and offers a series of exercises designed to reveal the truth of the situation, acknowledge the pain, learn to set boundaries, and break self-defeating patterns. In a particularly sensitive area, Forward addresses the issue of incest and mothers who have been complicit in such abuse, urging incest victims to seek professional therapy. While this title is labeled as a guide for women whose mothers are unable to love, its sound advice is applicable to persons of any gender. And while readers may be overwhelmed with painful memories at some junctures—an eventuality Forward expects and addresses—this book should be considered required reading for anyone who had an abusive childhood. (Oct.) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Forward validates the reader's feelings and presents effective coping mechanisms, offering suggestions on setting boundaries, negotiating for a better relationship, [and] being assertive . . . Highly recommended." (Library Journal (starred review))"A useful challenge to accepted wisdom about the normally taboo subject of mother love, with helpful tips on how to jump-start the healing process." (Kirkus Reviews)"Once again Susan Forward has identified an important issue that has been calling out for her expertise and unique perspective. This landmark book is powerful, accessible and extremely supportive - just what women need! Her case examples are riveting, her techniques are brilliant and her wisdom is poignant." (Beverly Engel, author of Healing Your Emotional Self and The Nice Girl Syndrome)"A riveting, compassionate guide to helping women transcend the wounds inflicted by their rejecting or abusive mothers." (Janis Abrahms Spring, Ph.D., author of How Can I Forgive You? The Courage to Forgive, The Freedom Not To)"Susan Forward has saved millions of lives with her profound wisdom that children raised by abusive parents need not "forgive and forget" to heal and move on to happy, healthy lives. . . . A powerful guide to self healing." (Carole H. Brower, Research Professor, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, UCLA)"I know so many women who will feel enormously grateful for Mothers Who Can't Love, and rightly so. This thoughtful and thorough book will validate their feelings and their stories, and even more important will offer invaluable and empowering wisdom." (Mira Kirshenbaum, author of I Love You but I Don't

Trust You and Too Good to Leave, Too Bad to Stay)

I always seem to be a good candidate for Susan's books. I've read Emotional Blackmail, Toxic In-Laws, and I've already had the chance to skim over Toxic Parents. I was so impatient for this book: Mothers Who Can't Love to come out. How thoroughly relieving that someone dares to challenge the world's greatest taboo: Unloving Mothers. I was born to a woman who should have never been allowed to be a mother. Since cutting off my ties with my mother, I have been urged to reconcile and have been criticized with every line possible. I've heard the "she gave you life" and "honour thy mother". I've been told to try to understand her because of lack of education. I've been told to suck it up because everyone knew how she was. Susan lists all these cliches. The queen mother of all criticism and threats is: "I hope when you have kids, they will not do this to you." Susan understands how hard it is to come to terms with not having a loving mother and how it's even harder to defend your decision from the innumerable people who do not accept it.The first part of her book addresses the many faces of an unloving mother. Mine was the narcissistic mother. Sometimes she could be downright psychotic and abusive. For me however when you have been hit enough, it's only a sheer irritation that my mother thought she could scare me with a belt. Susan gave me such clarity and validation with this section. I was always so confused as to why my mother could occasionally be loving and why everything went down the drain when I found my soulmate. These kinds of mothers don't mind you as long as you do what she wants you to do, as long as she has control over you, and most of all-- as long as you don't become a woman. I no longer feel threatened when my relatives try to remind me of the good times I had with my mother. In a lot of ways, I was no more than a piece of property to her. I was deprived and pruned so that I could one day be given away like property then people would see how amazing and strict she was. Thus, she would gain other people's fear and respect. That was her ambition all along and it didn't sit well with her that I refused to be treated like a trophy. My world came crashing down when I realized her need for fear and respect from a bunch of faceless people meant more to her than my life and happiness. She had no qualms about trying to break me, thinking I would eventually capitulate. Like many unloving mothers, she wreaked havoc on my conscience. I felt horrible for not obeying her commands. I felt so guilty whenever she reminded me of all she did for me. Like many daughters of unloving mothers, you break in another way be it physical illness or in my case: depression.This book also made me aware of how every experience with an unloving mother will mold the way you go through life. I've been on the receiving end of my mother saying: "I wish you were never born" and "You should have died a long time ago"-- all in the same breath. However, her destruction did

not start when I fell from grace. The tendency to feel responsible for other people's happiness, feeling guilty if you don't comply with other people's wishes, and chasing approval all steams from how your mother raised you. It was such a shock for me to read that love does not have to be earned. I still remember my bridesmaids' speech during my wedding. They called me loving. They said they loved me. I was speechless and felt that I didn't deserve it. Sure I love my husband but I never expected much of it back. How bizarre it was for me when he was always there for me and took care of me without a second thought. How bizarre it was for me when a friend pointed out that my husband loves me more than how other husbands love their wives.All of these scars and self-punishment were from the way my mother programmed me from birth. No, I will never have a loving mother but that is okay. The notion of the Loving Mother is bade farewell in Susan's book. I learned to say that it's okay. Moreover, I can be a loving mother to myself. And just because I never received the nurture I needed, it doesn't mean that I can't be a loving mother when I have children.Most importantly, my rights are spelled out. I no longer need to feel guilty. It was my right to live my life the way I wanted. It is MY choice whether I want to have my mother in my life. If I am ever urged or criticized again to have my mother in my life, that person will be on the receiving end of some very good non-defensive communication.

The concept that mothers are good people by virtue of pushing a baby out of her nether-regions is pervasive. I don't know how many times I've heard people say that my mother wouldn't act the way she does if only I'd been a good child, or that my mother loved me in her own way and I just didn't understand, or even that I could have had it worse because she didn't hit me as much as others.This book helped me realize that my mother's imperfections, projections, and most of all her abuse, were not my fault. I had already been on the path of healing but deep down I blamed myself for all of it.The author is completely honest about how toxic some relationships can be. What I find particularly important is that she doesn't force you to think that every relationship is salvageable, unlike some other therapists and authors. Sometimes they won't change, sometimes they won't learn, and sometimes they will continue to abuse even worse than before. She tells you that it's okay to let go, and that you don't have to sacrifice your own health to pretend that the cultural script of "Mother's always right" is, well, always right.

I think this book is helpful for learning the different types of abusers, developing some coping strategies, and for moving forward with your life in a healthier way. My mother fit almost every category in the book and the abuse she and my father inflicted on myself and my siblings caused

long-standing problems for all of us. Her abusive behavior continued well into my adult years,and I tolerated it, not knowing any better, until I became physically ill and was hospitalized. That was when I first learned she was abusive and I was allowing it to go on! Needless to say, she hasn't been a part of my life for many years now, but the damage was already done. I have been in counseling, have attended al-anon meetings, and have read numerous self-help books, including other books by Dr. Forward. I find her style of writing is easy for me to read and understand and I like her use of personal case stories. There are so many times I read what has happened to someone else and can completely relate because the same thing happened to me! Her suggestions on how to deal with the pain and grief of specific incidents were very helpful. This book was not easy for me to get through because of the emotions some of the exercises unleashed. It took me over 6 months to finish it, but when I did, I felt that I finally had a handle on what had happened to me, both in understanding the whys, and discovering ways to work through the emotional pain. It's been almost as long since I finished the book. I wish I could say that was the end of it, but I don't think you can ever get past that kind of treatment completely. It seems to rear its ugly head at the times you least expect it. At least now I have some tools to put it back in its place.

This book is truly about SURVIVAL for those of us who grew up as a hostage in this kind of home life. Some reviewers have pinged this book for spelling/grammatical errors, and I concede that is true; however, the true meat of the book is in the insights and background that give a basis for beginning to understand someone who is otherwise not understandable, as well as pointing out which patterns are in fact abusive. Doesn't excuse what was done; just makes it less alien and gives hope for healing the damage. Even just RECOGNIZING that damage really did happen is huge; my experience was that the so-called "helping agencies" (the court system, counselors, authors of pop psych books, doctors, friends and family's perception) did NOT help, but in fact increased the damage by taking the easy way out and telling me it was "all in my head" and "she couldn't have done that." This book has had a huge impact on my life already, and I will undoubtedly re-read it many times. I cannot overstate how helpful this book has been to me.

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