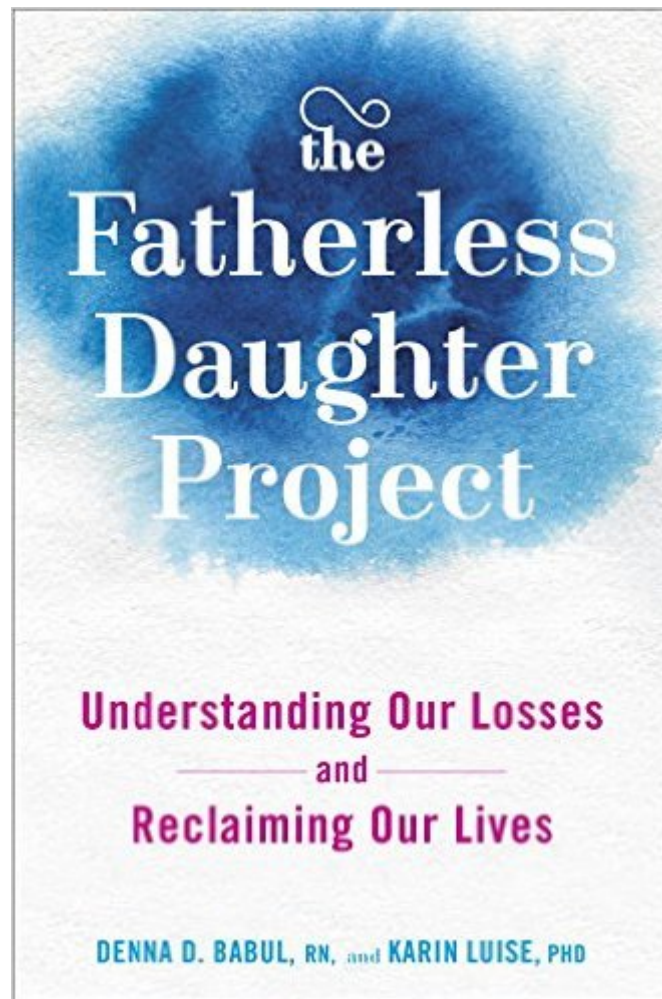


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The Fatherless Daughter Project: Understanding Our Losses And Reclaiming Our Lives



Synopsis

“This groundbreaking work will give voice to an enormous population of women who are struggling to understand themselves in the face of their fathers’ absence.” —Claire Bidwell Smith, author of *The Rules of Inheritance* and *After This* — When *Motherless Daughters* was published 20 years ago, it unleashed a tsunami of healing awareness. When Denna Babul and Karin Smithson couldn’t find the equivalent book for fatherlessness, *The Fatherless Daughter* Project was born. The book will set fatherless women on the path to growth and fulfillment by helping them to understand how their loss has impacted their lives. — A father is supposed to provide a sense of security and stability. Losing a father comes with particular costs that vary depending on the way he left and how old a girl was when she lost him. Drawing on interviews with over 5000 women who became fatherless due to death, divorce, neglect, and outright abandonment, the authors have found that fatherless daughters tend to push their emotions underground. — These issues in turn become distinct patterns in their relationships as adult women and they often can’t figure out why. Delivered with compassion and expertise, this book allows readers support and understanding they never had when they first needed it, and it encourages the conversation to continue.

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Customer Reviews

This book helped me understand a lot about myself. There were certain qualities about myself that I just recently started becoming aware of and this book explained the sources of those personality traits to me. The book covers the various ways daughters can become "fatherless". From divorce,

abandonment, death, etc. And the ways those ways of becoming fatherless affect the daughters. In my case, I was particularly interested in how the divorce, leaving for other women, type of becoming "fatherless" affected the daughters. And I have to say, their research seems to be rather accurate. As I can vouch for some of the feelings they describe. Particularly, the notion that one has to understand that "he's not not there because of you. He's not there because of what's going on with him." I also was impacted by the notion where Julia undergoes counseling and realized that "letting go of the resentment that trapped me for so many years gave me the freedom to find my true calling." As I've undergone career changes, as well. I could also understand the testimony of Rebecca where she describes how her brother and she "lived between two different lifestyles", the one being more affluent than the other. And I think especially for me, I have definitely experienced the the thoughts of being "bound and determined not to repeat the same mistakes as their parents. They will do just about anything not to re-experience the pain of abandonment." And I have to admit, I share the traits they talk about in daughters of divorced Dads when they talk about how they are the most critical of their fathers, the feelings of abandonments are overreaching and linger well into adulthood, and they have more defiant behavior towards authority.

Both authors of this book are fatherless. According to the introduction, Babul lost her father through divorce and then early death, and Luise lost her father through divorce and family dysfunction. Their stories aren't exactly front and center in this book, but they do come up a lot. (It's clear that the authors wrote this as much for themselves as for others.) Their goal with this book is pretty straightforward: they want to help other fatherless daughters understand how their father's absence has affected them and how they can move on from the pain of loss. The book is divided into eight chapters. The first half of the book mostly talks about the different circumstances that might lead to a woman being abandoned by her father. The second half (the real meat of the book, in my opinion) gets into the nitty gritty of how losing a father affects future relationships, as well as how fatherless daughters can learn to cope with whatever pain they are holding on to, process it, then move toward living joyful and content lives. I don't think I was prepared, at first, for the uber casual and friendly tone of the book, but I warmed up to it quickly. Both Babul and Luise come off as very kind and authentic, forthright and honest, but also extremely gentle and encouraging. Reading the book is like talking to a really nice, insightful therapist. I will say, though, that the first half of the book is a little slow. Babul and Louise spend A LOT of time talking about ALL the possible types of "fatherless" family situations: Here's how you might feel if your dad died, here's how you might feel if your dad was emotionally absent, here's how you might feel if your dad committed suicide, abused

you, went to jail, had an addiction, etc.

If you're a woman (of any age) who has experienced the loss—or in some cases, more accurately, the partial or total absence of a birth father—and who is looking not only to come to terms with the impact of that loss, but to move forward with less pain, this is a book worth spending some time with. If you've already spent some time confronting your own feelings, you may feel that some of the insights and observations in this book are stating the obvious. Depending on how self-aware you are, this may (or may not) be true. There are some parts you can perhaps skim. But if you're just becoming aware of the impact of the loss or if you've struggled with it and spent a life pretending there was no problem or challenge surrounding the absence (whether through death, disease, divorce or other factor), this is a very good place to start your journey to awareness and acceptance. (I'm not using the words "heal" or "recovery" here because honestly, I don't know if one ever really gets over this kind of loss. At best, one digs in, finds a way to put it in context, learns how it has affected your choices and behavior, and then course-corrects, if needed, to create a life that is NOT about the past but about enjoying the present for what it is and what it can be. This book was written by two women who are personally familiar with the loss of a father and who honestly share their stories, along with those of other women. If you've felt as if you're alone in this particular type of loss, the stories alone will help you realize that you are not the only one to deeply feel such loss. The inclusion of statistics that detail who, when and other facts about who experiences this type of loss were a sobering reminder that, sadly, we are not alone in this type of loss.

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