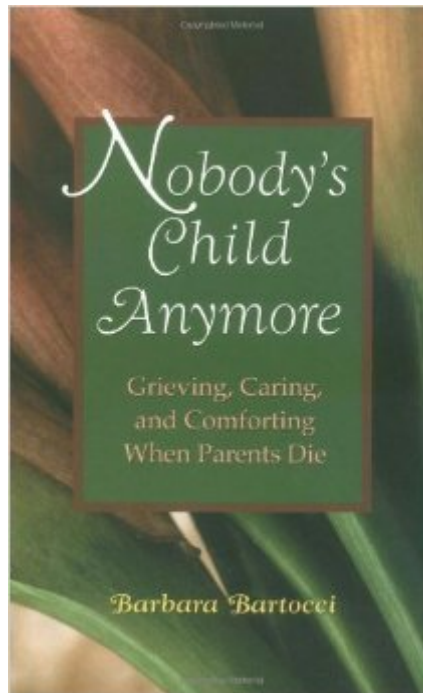


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Nobody's Child Anymore: Grieving, Caring And Comforting When Parents Die



Synopsis

As longevity expands so too does the reality that increasing numbers of people become Nobody's Child Anymore. Unlike most books on grieving the loss of a parent, Barbara Bartocci takes a comprehensive approach from caring for a dying parent through finding new meaning beyond grief. Barbara Bartocci, who has lost both of her parents, speaks from experience and offers poignant vignettes approaching hard questions with compassion and a wealth of practical wisdom. Nobody's Child Anymore is an immensely helpful and comforting resource for anyone caring for a dying parent, mourning the loss, caring for the remaining parent and seeking new meaning beyond grief.

Introduction When our parents die and we are adults, we're expected to say, This is an appropriate death. My father . . . my mother . . . lived a full life. It is their time. I'm okay with that. But we are not okay with it. Losing a parent--at any age--is a profound loss. It is such a primal connection, that of parent and child. No matter what your age, no matter what the circumstances of your rearing, no matter how loving or how lethal your relationship, it's impossible to completely ignore the people who gave you life. You can divorce a spouse but not your parents. There is that ultimate tie--the genetic inheritance that somehow entwines us no matter how hard we may try to disconnect. As society ages, and more people experience this inevitable passage, people are beginning to realize that it's not an easy loss just because your parents are in their 60s, 70s, 80s, or even 90s. I was surprised at the depth of my pain when my parents died. And since there isn't yet a lot of cultural support when adults lose their parents, I had to feel my way, as if walking through an unfamiliar forest. I have written this book as a gentle guide through the forest of feelings you may be encountering. It is not a practical manual--turn to other sources for help in planning a funeral or settling an estate. Rather, I share my own experience and the thoughts and experiences of others as a source to ease your soul-pain. The four parts of this book parallel the four-fold experience of loss through which we pass. It begins when we are called upon to care for one of our parents and we come to the difficult realization that Mom or Dad is dying. Then, after the loss, we struggle with the pain of our grief and perhaps some unresolved issues in our relationship with our parents. At the same time, we are often called upon to offer comfort and support to our surviving parent. We may then lose a second parent and experience the special pain of becoming an adult "orphan." Grieving is a process that has its own time. But eventually, we come to some resolution of our pain and we complete our grief. I have learned that there is a special light that may come in the wake of our parents' leaving. I discovered, as you will, too, that in a deeper sense, our parents don't leave us. They become part of us.

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Customer Reviews

My 88 year old dad died January 8, 2003. Although I was unable to look at his picture for a couple of months, I thought I was "handling it" just fine. Besides, although my mother was also suffering from dementia, she was obviously aware that Daddy was gone and I needed to concentrate on her. Then on May 7, 2003, Mama died - and I began to grieve. It was almost like losing them both the same day. I guess as long as my mother was still here, I still felt a connection to my dad as well. I never expected to hurt so badly. They were 88, in extremely poor health and had not been like the parents I had known for quite some time. But now they are gone. Even knowing this was coming and being 50 years old myself, I was still devastated. After I had finished everything with the memorial service and everyone had gone home, I began to realize how very bereft I was. I felt foolish having so much grief - after all, they were old and sick, better off now, etc., all of the usual platitudes. I have a strong religious faith and have no questions as to where they are now. I did not want them to continue suffering. And yet, I missed my mom and dad. I first read "The Orphaned Adult," which was extremely helpful and which I recommend. But I still seemed to be sadder than I thought I should be for a person losing parents later in life. I could no longer sleep through the night, if I got to sleep at all. I had thought about ordering this book for a while, but felt I was being too self indulgent. Finally I gave in and I am so thankful I did. Ms. Bartocci hit me "right where I lived." She put words to my sadness and gave me the permission to "still" feel sad. She describes grief as individual to each of us, which made me feel less of a "freak." As I said, I am not a "group help" person.

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