



Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery

By Rachel Adams

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Rachel Adams's life had always gone according to plan. She had an adoring husband, a beautiful two-year-old son, a sunny Manhattan apartment, and a position as a tenured professor at Columbia University. Everything changed with the birth of her second child, Henry. Just minutes after he was born, doctors told her that Henry had Down syndrome, and she knew that her life would never be the same.

In this honest, self-critical, and surprisingly funny book, Adams chronicles the first three years of Henry's life and her own transformative experience of unexpectedly becoming the mother of a disabled child. A highly personal story of one family's encounter with disability, *Raising Henry* is also an insightful exploration of today's knotty terrain of social prejudice, disability policy, genetics, prenatal testing, medical training, and inclusive education. Adams untangles the contradictions of living in a society that is more enlightened and supportive of people with disabilities than ever before, yet is racing to perfect prenatal tests to prevent children like Henry from being born. Her book is gripping, beautifully written, and nearly impossible to put down. Once read, her family's story is impossible to forget.

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Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery By Rachel Adams Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1000112 in Books
- Published on: 2013-09-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x 5.50" w x .75" l, .97 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

In this moving, literary book, Adams, a professor of English and American studies at Columbia University, shares the story of her second son, Henry, born with Down syndrome. Though she was pushing 40, she did not get amniocentesis when she was pregnant, and she doesn't regret it, either. "The amnio reveals the genetic makeup of your fetus. That's all," she says. "It certainly can't tell prospective parents what it will be like to raise a child with a disability or anything about the person that baby will become." As she notes, "everyone came away charmed by Henry." The book is filled with wonderful anecdotes portraying Henry in all his lovability. And it raises important questions about now-routine genetic testing to identify chromosomal abnormalities. Adams writes, "Down syndrome isn't a disease that needs to be cured. The problem is with the world not our kids. I want to change the way other people think. I want to change the world." This book is a step in that direction. --Karen Springen

Review

"An important, hopeful book."—Susannah Meadows, *New York Times*
(Susannah Meadows *New York Times*)

"In this quietly moving memoir, Adams writes about coming to terms with her son's diagnosis, education, limitations, and identity. . . . Generous and honest."—*Boston Globe*
(*Boston Globe*)

"We learn from Adams what it means to have a son very different from most others in mind and body, whose future is uncertain, but whose life is infused with love and so worth living."—Jerome Groopman, *New York Review of Books*
(Jerome Groopman *New York Review of Books*)

"Powerful, poignant, and persuasive."—Glenn Altschuler, *Psychology Today*: This is America blog
(Glenn Altschuler *Psychology Today*, *This is America* blog)

"In her luminous memoir . . . Adams writes about how the birth of her son changed everything, and, at the same time, brought her back to the beginnings of a journey that had been long in the making."—Sarah Torretta Klock, *New York Family Magazine*
(Sarah Torretta Klock *New York Family Magazine*)

"This is a terrific book—gorgeously written, beautifully realized."—Michael Bérubé, author of *Life as We Know It: A Father, a Family, and an Exceptional Child*
(Michael Berube 2013-03-12)

"...this book is a composite of the challenges and enjoyments of the first few years of a child with special needs and the family....very useful for parents, family members, but also professionals including physicians, nurses, therapists, and genetic counselors."—Fran Hickey, M.D., Director of the Sie Center for Down Syndrome, Colorado Children's Hospital
(Fran Hickey 2013-03-14)

"Adams succeeds in the difficult task of rendering intensely personal material in a way that makes any reader reflect on larger cultural questions...This book should be mandatory reading for all medical students, especially those entering the fields of obstetrics and gynecology."—Georgina Kleege, author of *Sight Unseen* and *Blind Rage: Letters to Helen Keller*
(Georgina Kleege 2013-03-21)

"Rachel Adams' *Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery* is a must-read, moving, thought-provoking, important. I highly recommend."—Jon Colman, President, National Down Syndrome Society
(Jon Colman 2013-04-08)

"*Raising Henry* is not just a forthright and poetic family chronicle; it is a provocative exploration of Down syndrome, disability, and what it means to be human. Adams is feisty, compassionate, and brilliant."—Penny Wolfson, author of *Moonrise: One Family, Genetic Identity and Muscular Dystrophy*
(Penny Wolfson 2013-04-16)

"With extraordinary eloquence and breathtaking honesty, Rachel Adams has allowed us to share every intimate moment of the profound journey of parenting her son Henry. I found myself savoring every beautifully chosen word. This is a remarkable memoir!"—Emily Perl Kingsley, author of "Welcome to Holland" and *Writer, Sesame Street*
(Emily Perl Kingsley 2013-04-18)

"Characterized by a poignant honesty and great integrity, probing intelligence and nuanced thinking, this is a wise, admirable, illuminating book."—Priscilla Gilman, author of *The Anti-Romantic Child: A Story of Unexpected Joy*
(Priscilla Gilman 2013-04-30)

"Rachel Adams brings us along on her personal journey, and, along the way, we all discover that exceptionality is not ultimately defined by our genetic beginnings."—Brian Skotko, M.D., M.P.P., Co-Director, Down Syndrome Program, Massachusetts General Hospital
(Brian Skotko 2013-06-14)

"Rachel Adams has a novelist's eye for story and a scholar's contextual insight. She's not afraid to document how she changes as events in her life take place, and thus, as her son grows, we see her grow as well."—Marie Myung-Ok Lee, author of *Somebody's Daughter*
(Marie Myung-Ok Lee 2013-10-08)

null (*Booklist*)

Winner of the 2014 Delta Kappa Gamma Society's Educator's Award.
(Educator's Award *The Delta Kappa Gamma Society* 2014-04-11)

From the Author

A conversation with Rachel Adams

Q: What motivated you to write Raising Henry?

A: I'm a literary critic by training, and when my son Henry was born, I immediately turned to literature to try to understand my circumstances. I was dismayed by the lack of reliable, informative reading material about raising a child with Down syndrome, as well as the quantity of misinformation I found in mainstream pregnancy guides and child-rearing books. I saw the need for a story told from a mother's perspective.

Q: Can you tell us some positive things you have discovered or experienced as the mother of a disabled child?

A: The best lesson I've learned from Henry is that the world is full of people who have devoted their lives and careers to helping others. I've seen my share of predictable ignorance and prejudice, but I was gratified by the more unexpected discovery of people with a genuine commitment to the rights and well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities. My list includes doctors and other health care professionals, social workers, teachers, therapists, service coordinators, caregivers, and many, many others who have given their time and energy to helping Henry develop to his full potential and securing the happiness and health of our family.

Q: What changes do you hope to see in the medical establishment and educational system with regard to treatment and services offered for people with disabilities?

A: I would like to see doctors receive better training to help prospective parents make decisions about what it might mean to have a person with a disability in the family. And I look forward to educators learning more about how to enable students with Down syndrome to develop to their full potential.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ray Nicolas:

Now a day folks who Living in the era wherever everything reachable by connect with the internet and the resources inside can be true or not need people to be aware of each info they get. How individuals to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Reading through a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information specially this Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery book because book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it everbody knows.

Debra Brunette:

Do you really one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt when you are in the book store? Attempt to pick one book that you find out the inside because don't judge book by its include may doesn't work here is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not seeing that fantastic as in the outside search likes. Maybe you answer can be Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and

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Donna Moore:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that question when you got scholars? We believe that that problem was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, Every individual has different hobby. And you also know that little person just like reading or as reading through become their hobby. You should know that reading is very important and book as to be the issue. Book is important thing to include you knowledge, except your own personal teacher or lecturer. You get good news or update regarding something by book. Different categories of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is niagra Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery.

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