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Bestselling author of Necessary Losses

JUDITH VIORST

WHAT WE KNOW, WISH WE HAD KNOWN,
AND STILL NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEING MARRIED

"Down-in-the-trenches marital sagacity." -The Washington Post

Grown-Up Marriage

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Amazon.com Review

In Grown-Up Marriage, bestselling author Judith Viorst uses her abundant gifts to consider how marriage pulls, cajoles, and commands us to grow up. By viewing marriage "as a problem we have to solve again and again," Viorst offers a fresh view of both the mirages of marriage and how readers can adjust their expectations to create an enduring state of the union. Complacency, warns Viorst, is the bind that unties. "If we imagine that marriage is where we can burp, bitch, snicker and snipe day after day without paying a price, we are wrong." She crafts a smart synthesis of decades of psychological research, case studies, and examples drawn from popular culture. Viorst rounds up the usual suspects—the routines that kill marriage, the outlaw in-laws, the mommy-daddy trap—and the unusual ones, including marital sibling rivalry and why second marriages often fail. Each subject is illuminated with nuanced, mirthful details about creating a mature marriage. Her insights are sometimes diluted with too many expert quotes or her own poetry. Still, her shrewd observations will make this book required reading before your next anniversary. --Barbara Mackoff

From Publishers Weekly

Viorst's comprehensive exploration of all things nuptial should be required reading for any betrothed who don't have a plainspeaking veteran to give them the lowdown on what happens when the honeymoon is over. Some of her topics-sex, in-laws, fighting-are standard fare for a book like this. Others, such as a look at the ho-hum ordinariness of daily married life and an overview of how kids change a couple, are more renegade in their honesty and clearly the product of Viorst's own 42 years of married wisdom. For example, how many matrimonial neophytes are truly honest about feeling competitive with their mates? "Such competition [doesn't] necessarily happen only in troubled marriages," writes Viorst. "Just as brothers and sisters vie with each other to be their parents' best-loved child, so may husbands and wives-in their wish to be best or first or most-engage in a marital version of sibling rivalry." Readers should be warned that the author is, in some ways, a product of her generation. It's not hard to detect Viorst's disdain for newfangled practices like living together before marriage and attachment parenting, but for the most part she presents an evenhanded picture of the choices modern couples face.

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Although marriage is for grown-ups, very few of us are grown up when we marry. Here, the bestselling author of Suddenly Sixty and Necessary Losses presents her life-affirming perspective on the joys, heartaches, difficulties, and possibilities of a grown-up marriage -- and no, that's not an oxymoron! Featuring interviews with married women and men, the findings of couples therapists, the truths offered by literature and movies, and a bemused exploration of her own marriage, Judith Viorst illuminates the issues couples struggle with from "I do" through "till death do us part." Examining marital rivalry, marital manners, marital sex (extramarital, too), marital fighting and apologies, what kids do for (and to) marriage, and the boredom and bliss of everyday married life, Viorst leaves no marital stone unturned. From the early years when we wonder "Who is this person?" and "What am I doing here?" to the realities of divorce, remarriage, and growing older (and old) together, Viorst offers insights and advice with honesty, humanity, and humor -- all the while recognizing how tough it is to be married and, when it works, how very precious it can be.

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Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

May have saved my marriage!

By Desiree

This is a terrific book for anyone at any stage in marriage - I read it as I was on the brink of divorce, I read most of it and had suggested to my husband that he read a chapter of it. Things have turned around and we are on the road to repair and re-comittment it seems, this book may have saved us.

Judith has wit and charm and sensibility combined to talk about various aspects of marriage, about everyday marriage - and how to improve it, about how various factors can affect marriage at various stages. Thumbs, fingers and toes are all up for Judiths book!

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

A Marital Must Read

By Victoria

This book should be compulsory reading for any couple contemplating marriage. In a sometimes gutwrenching analysis of modern marriage, Viorst spells out the fallacies of our society's view on marital bliss in a way that will challenge and, on occasion, shock you with its ability to reflect your own romantic relationship.

One of the most provocative chapters is, "The First Shocks of Marriage." This chapter outlines the expectations we bring into marriage and the feelings of betrayal that result when those expectations are invariably, and sometimes brutally, crushed. As a divorced, middle-aged woman with many female friends who maintain a 'revolving door' of romantic relationships, the concept of feeling emotionally betrayed is one that will speak to every woman...and should be understood by every man. Viorst cites the common female viewpoint that "marriage should be nothing less than love, adoration, companionship, physical intimacy, emotional availability, respect, humor and tolerance." And the male viewpoint Viorst cites is one that expects

a wife to "respect his need for autonomy and give him plenty of room to do his own thing." Yet, if anything, the reality of marriage teaches us that we often won't get all, or even some, of what we expected.

One lesson every individual who reads this book should learn, and learn yet once again, is that marriage is work...Work...WORK. This book, like no other I have read, made me question whether I'm up to it. :-) It also made me realize that, when it does work, when both halves of the couple (not either/or) are willing to work diligently at keeping the dream alive, the reward is priceless.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

I got married at 56...

By Reader

I loved being single for 56 years: the freedom, the quiet, the selfish choices. Then I fell in love and married, 4 years ago. It was a traumatic adjustment -- still is! Sometimes wondered why in the world...even though I knew...but this book, from page one, bolstered my confidence and was a delightful read. I will never delete it from my Kindle! Pick your battles, and read this book! Thank you Ms. Viorst.

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