

Held Together: A Shared Memoir of Motherhood, Medicine, and Imperfect Love

Rebecca N. Thompson, MD

Related reading

For a list of all available resources, please visit www.rebeccanthompson.com

Have a book to suggest for these lists? [Please message me here!](#)



Tess

Love Letters

- Tonja Krautter, PsyD, LCSW. *When Your Baby Won't Stop Crying: A Parent's Guide to Colic*. Sourcebooks, 2006.
- Tracy Hogg, RNMH, MS, with Melinda Blau. *Secrets of the Baby Whisperer: How to Calm, Connect, and Communicate with Your Baby*. Ballantine, 2001.
- Ilyse Dobrow DiMarco, PhD. *Mom Brain: Proven Strategies to Fight the Anxiety, Guilt, and Overwhelming Emotions of Motherhood and Relax into Your New Self*. The Guilford Press, 2020.
- Caitlin Slavens and Chelsea Bodie. *Not Your Mother's Postpartum Book: Normalizing Post-Baby Mental Health Struggles, Navigating #MOMLife, and Finding Strength Amid the Chaos*. PESI, 2023.
- Jessica Grose. *Screaming on the Inside: The Unsustainability of American Motherhood*. Mariner, 2022.
- Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn (editor). *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*. Pantheon, 1998.
- Monique Fields and Yesenia Moises (illustrator). *Honeysmoke: A Story of Finding Your Color*. Macmillan, 2019.

Shreya

Contrasts

- Jimmie C. Holland, MD, and Sheldon Lewis. *The Human Side of Cancer: Living with Hope, Coping with Uncertainty*. Harper, 2000.
- Rebecca Skloot. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Crown, 2010.
- Suleika Jaouad. *Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted*. Random House, 2021.
- Nicole Chung. *All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir*. Catapult, 2018.

- Julia Davis. *Preparing for Adoption: Everything Adopting Parents Need to Know About Preparations, Introductions and the First Few Weeks*. Jessica Kingsley, 2015.
- Margaret Haerens (editor). *International Adoptions: Opposing Viewpoints*. Greenhaven Press, 2011.
- Sanjay Patel. *The Little Book of Hindu Deities: From the Goddess of Wealth to the Sacred Cow*. Plume, 2006.
- Jamie Lee Curtis. *Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born*. HarperCollins, 2000.

Erin

Blood and Promises

- Amy Baskin and Heather Fawcett. *More Than a Mom: Living a Full and Balanced Life When Your Child Has Special Needs*. Woodbine House, 2006.
- Elisa J. Sobo, PhD, and Paul S. Kurtin, MD (editors). *Optimizing Care for Young Children with Special Health Care Needs: Knowledge and Strategies for Navigating the System*. Paul H. Brookes, 2007.
- Lisa Weed Phifer, DEd, NCSP, and Laura Sibbald, MA, CCC-SLP. *Trauma-Informed Social-Emotional Toolbox for Children and Adolescents: 116 Worksheets and Skill-Building Exercises to Support Safety, Connection, and Empowerment*. PESI, 2020.
- Randy Shilts. *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic (20th Anniversary Edition)*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2007.
- Abraham Verghese, MD, MACP. *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story*. Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Gigi Robinson. *A Kids Book About Chronic Illness*. A Kids Book About, 2023.

Rachel

Enough for Today

- Kate White, MD. *Your Guide to Miscarriage and Pregnancy Loss: Hope and Healing When You're No Longer Expecting*. Mayo Clinic Press, 2021.
- Sana Goldberg, RN. *How to Be a Patient: The Essential Guide to Navigating the World of Modern Medicine*. HarperWave, 2019.
- Maya Dusenbery. *Doing Harm: The Truth about How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed, and Sick*. HarperOne, 2018.
- Aubrey Gordon. *What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat*. Beacon, 2020.
- Matthew Cordell. *Wish*. Little, Brown, 2018.

Anna

Fairy Tales

- Deborah L. Davis, PhD, and Mara Tesler Stein, PsyD. *Parenting Your Premature Baby and Child: The Emotional Journey*. Fulcrum, 2004.
- Melody Schreiber (editor). *What We Didn't Expect: Personal Stories about Premature Birth*. Melville House, 2020.
- Kelley and Thomas French. *Juniper: The Girl Who Was Born Too Soon*. Little, Brown, 2016.
- Alexa Stevenson. *Half Baked: The Story of My Nerves, My Newborn, and How We Both Learned to Breathe*. Running Press, 2010.
- Hunter Clarke-Fields, MSAE. *Raising Good Humans: A Mindful Guide to Breaking the Cycle of Reactive Parenting and Raising Kind, Confident Kids*. New Harbinger, 2019.
- Jessi Hempel. *The Family Outing: A Memoir*. HarperOne, 2022.
- Diane Stanley. *Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter*. HarperCollins, 2002.
- Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko (illustrator). *The Paper Bag Princess*. Annick Press, 1981.

Maya

So Far

- Donna Rothert, PhD. *At a Loss: Finding Your Way After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Infant Death*. Open Air Books, 2019.
- Elizabeth McCracken. *An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination*. Little, Brown, 2008.
- Joann Cantrell. *Carried Within Me: Echoes of Infant Loss from Bereaved Parents*. Lighthouse Point Press, 2019
- Julia Samuel, MBE. *Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death, and Surviving*. Scribner, 2018.
- KC Davis, LPC. *How to Keep House While Drowning: A Gentle Approach to Cleaning and Organizing*. S&S/Simon Element, 2022.
- Atul Gawande, MD. *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*. Metropolitan Books, 2009.
- Ceece Kelley. *Rainbow Letters: A Book for Rainbow Babies*. Soaring Kite Books, 2023.

Kelly

Breathe

- Julie Lythcott-Haims, JD. *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success*. Henry Holt, 2015.

- Jessica Lahey, JD. *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed*. Harper, 2016.
- Nina Riggs, MFA. *The Bright Hour: A Memoir of Living and Dying*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.
- Rachel H. S. Ginocchio, MPH. *Roads to Family: All the Ways We Come to Be*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2023.
- Julie A. Stamm and Chamisa Kellogg (illustrator). *Some Days: A Tale of Love, Ice Cream, and My Mom's Chronic Illness*. The Experiment, 2021.
- Kathryn Otoshi and Bret Baumgarten. *Beautiful Hands*. Blue Dot Press, 2015.

Victoria

Body Of

- Kay Redfield Jamison, PhD. *Fires in the Dark: Healing the Unquiet Mind*. Knopf, 2023.
- Susan Rose Blauner, MSW, LCSW. *How I Stayed Alive When My Brain Was Trying to Kill Me: One Person's Guide to Suicide Prevention*. William Morrow, 2002.
- Molly Caro May. *Body Full of Stars: Female Rage and My Passage into Motherhood*. Counterpoint, 2018.
- Sonya Renee Taylor. *The Body Is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love (2nd Edition)*. Berrett-Koehler, 2021.
- Erin Pepler. *Send Me Into the Woods Alone: Essays on Motherhood*. Invisible Publishing, 2022.
- Jenny Lawson. *Furiously Happy: A Funny Book About Horrible Things*. Flatiron, 2015.
- Virginia Sole-Smith. *Fat Talk: Parenting in the Age of Diet Culture*. Henry Holt, 2023.
- Dawn Huebner, PhD. *What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety (What-to-Do Guides for Kids Series)*. Magination Press, 2005.
- Marc Colagiovanni and Peter Reynolds (illustrator). *When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left*. Scholastic, 2023.

Marissa

Carry

- John DeGarmo, EdD. *The Foster Care Survival Guide: The Essential Guide for Today's Foster Parents*. Atlantic, 2018.
- Glenn E. Singleton. *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools (2nd Edition)*. Corwin, 2015.
- Bettina L. Love, PhD. *We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Beacon Press, 2019.

- Ross Greene, PhD. *The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children (6th Edition)*. Harper, 2021.
- Edward M. Hallowell, MD, and John J. Ratey, MD. *ADHD 2.0: New Science and Essential Strategies for Thriving with Distraction--from Childhood through Adulthood*. Ballantine, 2021.
- Kristin L. Kali. *Queer Conception: The Complete Fertility Guide for Queer and Trans Parents-to-Be*. Sasquatch, 2022.
- Jasper Peach and Quince Frances (illustrator). *You'll Be a Wonderful Parent: Advice and Encouragement for Rainbow Families of All Kinds*. Hardie Grant Books, 2023.
- Todd Parr. *We Belong Together*. Little, Brown, 2007.

Eriko

Lines

- Lawson Fusao Inada, MFA (editor). *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience*. Heyday Books/California Historical Society, 2000.
- George Takei, with Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker (illustrator). *They Called Us Enemy*. Top Shelf Productions, 2019.
- Jerome Groopman, MD. *How Doctors Think*. Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
- Lee Gutkind (editor). *I Wasn't Strong Like This When I Started Out: True Stories of Becoming a Nurse*. In Fact Books, 2013.
- Eve Rodsky, JD. *Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do (and More Life to Live)*. Putnam, 2019.
- Dani Shapiro. *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love*. Knopf, 2019.
- Joyce Maguire Pavao, EdD, LCSW, LMFT. *The Family of Adoption*. Beacon Press, 2005.
- Suzanne Lang and Max Lang. *All Kinds of Families*. Random House, 2019.

Stacey

This One Thing

- Lori Gottlieb, LMFT. *Maybe You Should Talk To Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed*. Harper, 2019.
- Robin Stern, PhD. *The Gaslight Effect: How to Spot and Survive the Hidden Manipulation Others Use to Control Your Life (Reprint Edition)*. Harmony, 2018.
- Jordan Davidson. *So When Are You Having Kids?: The Definitive Guide for Those Who Aren't Sure If, When, or How They Want to Become Parents*. Sounds True, 2022.

- Kate Bowler, PhD. *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*. Random House, 2018.
- Nikki Vargas. *Wanderess: The Unearth Women Guide to Traveling Smart, Safe, and Solo*. Clarkson Potter, 2022.
- Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen (illustrator). *Extra Yarn*. HarperCollins 2012.

Bree

Maker

- Rebecca A. Clark, MD, PhD, Gloria Richard-Davis, MD, FACOG, Jill Hayes, PhD, Michelle Murphy, JD, and Katherine Pucheu Theall, PhD. *Planning Parenthood: Strategies for Success in Fertility Assistance, Adoption, and Surrogacy*. Johns Hopkins, 2009.
- Diane Ehrensaft, PhD. *Mommies, Daddies, Donors, Surrogates: Answering Tough Questions and Building Strong Families*. Guilford, 2005.
- Laurie Garrett. *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1994.
- Abigail R. Gehring. *Homesteading: A Backyard Guide to Growing Your Own Food, Canning, Keeping Chickens, Generating Your Own Energy, Crafting, Herbal Medicine, and More (2nd Edition)*. Skyhorse Publishing, 2014.
- Jodi Picoult. *Wish You Were Here*. Ballantine Books, 2021.
- Dan Saks and Brooke Smart. *Families Grow*. Penguin, 2021.
- LeUyen Pham. *Outside, Inside*. Roaring Brook, 2020.

Olivia

Anticipation

- Cheryl Strayed, MFA. *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*. Knopf, 2012.
- Steph Jagger. *Everything Left to Remember: My Mother, Our Memories, and a Journey Through the Rocky Mountains*. Flatiron, 2022.
- Lisa Doggett, MD, MPH. *Up the Down Escalator: Medicine, Motherhood, and Multiple Sclerosis*. Health Communications, 2023.
- Roz Chast. *Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant?: A Memoir*. Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Perri Klass, MD. *A Not Entirely Benign Procedure: Four Years as a Medical Student*. Signet, 1988.

- David Pogue. *How to Prepare for Climate Change: A Practical Guide to Surviving the Chaos*. Simon & Schuster, 2021.
- Mo Willems. *Waiting Is Not Easy!* Hyperion, 2014.

Lia

Third Child

- Danielle Ofri, MD, PhD. *Incidental Findings: Lessons from My Patients in the Art of Medicine*. Beacon, 2005.
- Barbara Kingsolver. *Animal Dreams*. HarperCollins, 1990.
- Becca Andrews. *No Choice: The Destruction of Roe v. Wade and the Fight to Protect a Fundamental American Right*. Hachette, 2022.
- Amelia Bonow and Emily Nokes (editors). *Shout Your Abortion*. PM Press, 2018.
- Carly Manes and Emulsify. *What's an Abortion Anyway?* Carly Manes, 2021.
- Cathy Blanford. *Something Happened: A Book for Children and Parents Who Have Experienced Pregnancy Loss (3rd Edition)*. Centering Corporation, 2019.

Nancy

Remotely

- Nancy Fresco, PhD. *Go Play Outside: Tips, Tricks, and Tales from the Trails*. University of Alaska Press, 2021.
- Lenore Skenazy. *Free-Range Kids: How Parents and Teachers Can Let Go and Let Grow (2nd Edition)*. Jossey-Bass, 2021.
- Christine K. Koh and Asha Dornfest. *Minimalist Parenting: Enjoy Modern Family Life More by Doing Less*. Routledge, 2017.
- Cordelia Fine, PhD. *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*. W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Jennifer Finney Boylan, MA. *Stuck in the Middle with You: A Memoir of Parenting in Three Genders*. Crown, 2013.
- Cory Silverberg. *Sex Is a Funny Word: A Book about Bodies, Feelings, and YOU*. Triangle Square, 2015.
- Kelly Bingham. *Z Is For Moose*. Greenwillow, 2012.

Tina

Solving for Unknowns

- Sheryl Sandberg, MBA. *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*. Knopf, 2017.
- Nora McInerny. *The Hot Young Widows Club: Lessons on Survival from the Front Lines of Grief*. Simon & Schuster/TED, 2019.
- Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD. *Healing a Spouse's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Husband or Wife Dies*. Companion Press, 2003.
- Mary-Frances O'Connor, PhD. *The Grieving Brain: The Surprising Science of How We Learn from Love and Loss*. HarperCollins, 2022.
- Joan Didion. *The Year of Magical Thinking*. Knopf, 2005.
- Amber Tamblyn (editor). *Listening In the Dark: Women Reclaiming the Power of Intuition*. Park Row, 2022.
- Imogen Hall. *The Family Travel Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Take Unforgettable Trips with Your Children*. Lonely Planet, 2020.
- Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*. Bantam Books, 1983.
- Andrea Beaty and David Roberts (illustrator). *Ada Twist, Scientist (The Questioners)*. Abrams Books, 2016.

Eileen

Doing the Math

- Russell Friedman and John W. James. *The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses Including Health (20th Anniversary Expanded Edition)*. Collins Living, 2009.
- Randine Lewis, PhD. *The Infertility Cure: The Ancient Chinese Wellness Program for Getting Pregnant and Having Healthy Babies*. Little, Brown, 2004.
- Jean Twenge, PhD. *The Impatient Woman's Guide to Getting Pregnant*. Atria, 2012.
- Jessica Hiemstra and Lisa Martin-Demoor (editors). *How To Expect What You're Not Expecting*. TouchWood, 2013.
- Marc Sedaka. *What He Can Expect When She's Not Expecting: How to Support Your Wife, Save Your Marriage, and Conquer Infertility*. Skyhorse, 2011.
- Loryn Brantz. *It Had To Be You*. HarperFestival, 2021.

Lydia

Given

- Robin Karr-Morse, MEd, LPC, with Meredith S. Wiley. *Scared Sick: The Role of Childhood Trauma in Adult Disease*. Basic Books, 2012.
- Bessel A. Van der Kolk, MD. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Viking, 2014.
- Glenn R. Schiraldi, PhD. *The Adverse Childhood Experiences Recovery Workbook: Heal the Hidden Wounds from Childhood Affecting Your Adult Mental and Physical Health*. New Harbinger, 2021.
- Lissa Rankin, MD. *The Anatomy of a Calling: A Doctor's Journey from the Head to the Heart and a Prescription for Finding Your Life's Purpose*. Rodale, 2015.
- Marianne Williamson. *Tears to Triumph: The Spiritual Journey from Suffering to Enlightenment*. HarperOne, 2016.
- Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu. *The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World*. HarperCollins, 2014.
- Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley. *Children Just Like Me*. DK, 1995.
- Gidget Rocoles Jimenez and Corazon Dandan-Albano (illustrator). *All About the Philippines: Stories, Songs, Crafts and Games for Kids*. Tuttle, 2015.

Carolyn

Anyone Else's Family

- Ann Fessler. *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade*. Penguin, 2006.
- Amber J. Keyser, PhD. *The V-Word: True Stories about First-Time Sex*. Simon & Schuster, 2016.
- Lisa Damour, PhD. *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers: Raising Connected, Capable, and Compassionate Adolescents*. Ballantine, 2023.
- Darcy Lockman, PhD. *All the Rage: Mothers, Fathers, and the Myth of Equal Partnership*. Harper, 2019.
- Mary Pipher, PhD. *Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing As We Age*. Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Karen Katz. *Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale*. Henry Holt, 1997.

Mitra

Other Women's Children

- Henrietta Mantel (editor). *No Kidding: Women Writers on Bypassing Parenthood*. Seal Press, 2013.
- Jerri Bell and Tracy Crow (editors). *It's My Country Too: Women's Military Stories from the American Revolution to Afghanistan*. University of Nebraska Press, 2017.
- Tim Seldin, MEd. *How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way (2nd Edition)*. DK, 2017.
- Nancy Davis Kho. *The Thank-You Project: Cultivating Happiness One Letter of Gratitude at a Time*. Running Press, 2019.
- Mariam Khan. *It's Not About the Burqa: Muslim Women on Faith, Feminism, Sexuality, and Race*. Picador, 2020.
- Ibtihaj Muhammad, with S. K. Ali, and Hatem Aly (illustrator). *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family*. Little, Brown, 2019.

Devorah

A Good Story

- Hope Edelman, MA. *Motherless Mothers: How Losing a Mother Shapes the Parent You Become*. Harper, 2007.
- Dan Shapiro, MD. *Delivering Doctor Amelia: The Story of a Gifted Young Obstetrician's Mistake and the Psychologist Who Helped Her*. Harmony, 2003.
- Anne Fadiman. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
- *The Best American Short Stories*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, yearly anthology since 1915.
- Meg Bowles, Catherine Burns, Jenifer Hixson, Sarah Austin Jenness, and Kate Tellers. *How to Tell a Story: The Essential Guide to Memorable Storytelling from The Moth*. Crown, 2022.
- Elizabeth Lillian Keating, PhD. *The Essential Questions: Interview Your Family to Uncover Stories and Bridge Generations*. TarcherPerigee, 2022.
- Selina Alko. *Daddy Christmas and Hanukkah Mama*. Knopf, 2012.

Becca

- Toni Weschler. *Taking Charge of Your Fertility: The Definitive Guide to Natural Birth Control, Pregnancy Achievement, and Reproductive Health (20th Anniversary Edition)*. William Morrow, 2015.

- Catherine Newman. *Waiting for Birdy: A Year of Frantic Tedium, Neurotic Angst, and the Wild Magic of Growing a Family*. Penguin, 2005.
- Amy Schumer and Christy Turlington Burns (editors). *Arrival Stories: Women Share Their Experiences of Becoming Mothers*. Dial Press, 2022.
- Eleanor Henderson and Anna Solomon (editors). *Labor Day: True Birth Stories by Today's Best Women Writers*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014.
- Jennifer Lincoln. *Let's Talk About Down There: An OB-GYN Answers All Your Burning Questions...without Making You Feel Embarrassed for Asking*. Andrews McMeel, 2021.
- Maureen Connolly and Dana Sullivan (editors). *Unbuttoned: Women Open Up About the Pleasures, Pains, and Politics of Breastfeeding*. Harvard Common Press, 2009.
- Andrew Solomon. *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*. Scribner, 2012.
- Leslie Jamison. *The Empathy Exams: Essays*. Graywolf Press, 2014.
- Arthur Kleinman. *The Illness Narratives*. Basic Books, 1988.
- Richard Louv. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books, 2008.
- Elizabeth Gilbert. *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. Riverhead, 2015.
- Ada Limon. *The Carrying*. Milkweed Editions, 2018.
- Norton Juster and Jules Feiffer (illustrator). *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Epstein & Carroll/Random House, 1961.
- Julie Fogliano and Erin E. Stead (illustrator). *If You Want to See a Whale*. Roaring Brook Press, 2013.

v October 2025