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Don't Roll Your Eyes: Making In-Laws Into Family



Synopsis

More than two million couples wed every year in the United States, bringing together a whole new family unit. The extended family may now include a hard to please mother-in-law who criticizes her daughter-in-law's childrearing; or a patriarchal father-in-law who expects all the kin round the dinner table every Sunday; or a new spouse, who a year or decade out, still gets shellshock visiting the in-laws. If that wasn't cause enough for a stiff drink, more than a million couples divorce each year, creating hard to define family structures. How do families handle the inevitable friction and how do they make sense of evolving family relationships? Ruth Nemzoff, an expert in family dynamics, empowers family members across the generations to define and create lasting bonds, including how to:

- *Welcome a new in-law from a different culture and religion into your family.*
- *Not let differences of politics or philosophy impact quality time with the extended family.*
- *Respond to major life changes in an in-law's life, including financial crises, illnesses, or career changes.*
- *Retain warm connections with in-laws even amidst divorce and remarriage.*

This is a must read for anyone dealing with a difficult in-law as well as anyone who will soon be welcoming a new member to their family.

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Customer Reviews

Ruth Nemzoff is a wise woman whose writing truly resonates with me. She offers advice on what to do when perfect strangers--or people you wish were strangers--become your family, namely in-laws. Nemzoff is an expert at navigating family dynamics and grasps all the different perspectives of intergenerational relationships. She examines the forces that make in-law relationships

troublesome as well as how multiple generations can benefit from them. She writes from experience and says that of all her careers--teacher, administrator, state legislator, and professor--mothering has been the most rewarding. She has four adult children, four in-law children, and seven grandchildren, with whom she has very satisfying relationships. It's easy to understand why, given her insight and communication skills. Here's an example of how she nails a basic problem: The generations often blame each other when expectations they don't even know they have are not met. We find ourselves angry, for example, when no gift arrives and we realize we expected one. We feel our emotions before we realize what we actually want. We often hang onto nostalgic expectations of family roles when roles are changing. The ease or difficulty of these relationships depends a lot on the willingness of all parties to make things work, says Nemzoff. Both generations want to be appreciated and acknowledged for their efforts and not taken for granted or judged. *Don't Roll Your Eyes* focuses on specific issues that can cause tension among the generations. Nemzoff explains that because of popular in-law jokes we can be wary of one another before we even meet. Or we can have different ideas about how much closeness we want. Another problem can be competition between sets of parental in-laws who may vie for priority.

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