



Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith

By Anne Lamott

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Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith By Anne Lamott

Look out for Anne's latest book, *Hallelujah Anyway*, on sale now.

With the trademark wisdom, humor, and honesty that made Anne Lamott's book on faith, *Traveling Mercies*, a runaway bestseller, *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith* is a spiritual antidote to anxiety and despair in increasingly fraught times.

The world is a more dangerous place than it was when Lamott's **Traveling Mercies** was published five years ago. Terrorism and war have become the new normal; environmental devastation looms even closer. And there are personal demands on Lamott's faith as well: turning fifty; her mother's Alzheimer's; her son's adolescence; and the passing of friends and time.

Fortunately for those of us who are anxious and scared about the state of the world, whose parents are also aging and dying, whose children are growing harder to recognize as they become teenagers, **Plan B** offers hope in the midst of despair. It shares with us Lamott's ability to comfort, and to make us laugh despite the grim realities.

Anne Lamott is one of our most beloved writers, and *Plan B* is a book more necessary now than ever. It will prove to be further evidence that, as **The Christian Science Monitor** has written, "Everybody loves Anne Lamott."

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Few people can write about faith, parenting, and relationships as can the talented, irreverent Anne Lamott. With characteristic black humor, ("Everyone has been having a hard time with life this year; not with all of it, just the waking hours") she updates us on the ongoing mayhem of her life since *Traveling Mercies*, and continues to unfold her spiritual journey.

Plan B finds Lamott wrestling with mid-life hormones and weight gain while parenting Sam, now a teenager with his own set of raging hormones. Her observations cover everything from starting a Sunday school to grief over the death of her beloved dog, Sadie; lamenting the war to bitterness over her relationship with her now-departed mother.

As she tugs and pokes out the knots in a slender gold chain necklace, it becomes a metaphor for letting go and learning to forgive. "...any willingness to let go inevitably comes from pain; and the desire to change changes you, and jiggles the spirit, gets to it somehow, to the deepest, hardest, most ruined parts." It's her willingness to show us the knotted-up, "ruined parts" of her life that make this collection of sometimes uneven essays so compelling.

"Everything feels crazy," writes Lamott, adding, "But on small patches of earth all over, I can see just as much messy mercy and grace as ever...." Lamott's essays will serve as reminders to readers of the patches of messy mercy and grace in a chaotic world.--*Cindy Crosby*

From Publishers Weekly

Five years after her bestselling *Traveling Mercies*, Lamott sends us 24 fresh dispatches from the frontier of her life and her Christian faith. To hear her tell it, neither the state of the country nor the state of her nerves has improved, to say the least. "On my forty-ninth birthday, I decided that all of life is hopeless, and I would eat myself to death. These are dessert days." Thankfully, her gift for conveying the workings of grace to left-wing, high-strung, beleaguered people like herself is still intact, as is her ability to convey the essence of Christian faith, which she finds not in dogma but in our ability to open our hearts in the midst of our confusion and hopelessness. Most of these pieces were published in other versions on Salon.com, and they cover subjects as disparate as the Bush administration; the death of Lamott's dog, her mother and a friend; life with a teenager and with her 50-year-old thighs--yet each shows how our hearts and lives can go "from parched to overflow in the blink of an eye." What is the secret? Lamott makes us laugh at the impossibility of it all; then she assures us that the most profound act we can accomplish on Earth is coming out of the isolation of our minds and giving to one another. Faith is not about how we feel, she shows; it is about how we live. "Don't worry! Don't be so anxious. In dark times, give off light. Care for the least of God's people!" Naturally, some pieces are stronger than others--her wonderful style can come across as a bit mannered, the wrapup a bit forced. But this is quibbling about a book that is better than brilliant. This is that rare kind of book that is like a having a smart, dear, crazy (in the best sense) friend walk next to us in sunlight and in the dark night of the soul.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Traveling Mercies chronicled Lamott's slow journey toward faith. Now in her 50s, Lamott still insists upon sugarcoating nothing in this enlightening update. She combines brilliant sparks of wit, self-deprecating humor, wisdom, and appreciation in these 24 essays, previously published in *Salon* (see

http://dir.salon.com/topics/anne_lamott/ for an excerpt from *Plan B*). If some have a moralistic bent, they rarely proselytize; instead, they inquire into Lamott's own, and sometimes naughty, truths. The best essays discuss Lamott's son's relationship with his father; conversely, *Entertainment Weekly* cited the piece about loving George W. Bush as Jesus as "an easy comic stunt." But the lesson is the same: "Gratitude, not understanding, is the secret to joy and equanimity." Although Lamott has had her share of life struggles, she sure makes it look easy. Buck up, kid: As Lamott says, "God has extremely low standards."

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Users Review

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