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*Catherine Newman*

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To fifty thousand readers, Catherine Newman is the beloved author of *Bringing Up Ben & Birdy*, a weekly column on [babycenter.com](http://babycenter.com). Now in the delightfully candid, outlandishly funny *Waiting for Birdy*, Newman charts the year she anticipated the birth of her second child while also coping with the realities of raising a toddler. As she navigates life with her existentially curious and heartbreakingly sweet three-year-old, and her doozy of a pregnancy, she lends her irresistibly unique voice to the secret thoughts and fears of parents everywhere. Filled with quirky warmth and razor-sharp wit, *Waiting for Birdy* captures the universal wonder, terror, humor, and tenderness of raising a family.

## **Waiting for Birdy: A Year of Frantic Tedium, Neurotic Angst, and the Wild Magic of Growing a Family Details**

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Author : Catherine Newman

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## **From Reader Review Waiting for Birdy: A Year of Frantic Tedium, Neurotic Angst, and the Wild Magic of Growing a Family for online ebook**

### **Alicia says**

This is the perfect book for anyone who has ever had even the slightest interest in having and raising children. Newman's sense of humor is perfect, quick, and truly borders on genius. If you don't laugh out loud at least ten times, someone should give you your money back. This is the real thing, the way life falls and rises, and the absolute promise that children are endlessly (and unknowingly) the wisest of creatures.

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### **Brian says**

(3.0) Started off poor, redeemed herself a bit toward the end

She overdid the analogies a bit, but some were fun. My most memorable one I liked was about having dinner party with toddlers in attendance: by the end of dinner the gnarled mass of unfinished conversations is like an armful of electrical wires you're trying to figure out how to reconnect.

Some other good "oh it's so true" moments about SIDS (we're scared to death of it and really can't do anything other than putting them to sleep on back...as a result, we wake up every 20 minutes and check for breathing), being tired, "trying again" 6 weeks after birth seems so far from anyone's mind.

But she seems like a 'difficult' person to live with. She essentially admits to resenting her husband for being such a good husband during her pregnancy and recovery, like she dislikes herself and takes it out on him. She also seems to take out a lot of frustration on her son. Not good.

On the other hand, she gives her husband an awful lot of credit for picking up maxipads for her. Does anyone cheer for her for doing the same?

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### **Laurie says**

This is my favorite of the many parenting memoirs that I've read in the last five years (since Iris was born). While Newman's story is about having a second child (Birdy), and I am not having more than one, she captures the experiences of mothering a newborn and a preschooler with perfect humor and horror. Ben is around age three in the book. I remember wondering if this was really what Iris would be like when she was three, and OH, WAS SHE EVER. This is Matthew's and my favorite part, both because it's funny and because it's EXACTLY what a preschooler is like.

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"Maybe you could talk to me about the nuts," he said. "Maybe you could just tell me about all the different kinds of nuts."

"Okay," I said, and then started listing: almonds, peanuts, hazelnuts. I looked at Ben and he nodded, so I

continued. Brazil nuts, pecans, cashews.

"Wait," Ben interrupted me, and chopped his hand in the air like an emphatic director. "Cashews are \*salted\* nuts."

"That's true," I said. "We usually get the salted kind."

"Well," and now he was starting to cry again, "I only wanted to hear the names of nuts that \*aren't\* salted." Then he collapsed in a sobbing heap on the floor.

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### **Molly Westerman says**

*Waiting for Birdy* is really very funny, and an easy and fast read.

My current situation overlaps quite a bit with that of the author during the period covered in the book (I'm a parenting/birth blogger currently pregnant with my second child, parenting a very verbal little boy, doing many of the same unconventional parenting things, married to someone I like a lot, etc.)--and yet I don't identify with her at all. She's just so *worried*. Her dark thoughts make my dark thoughts look like bunnies skipping across a field of daisies; I've been blessed since my child's birth with the firm assumption that he's just fine, and I assume we'll be fine once there's another person in our family, too. But this unexpected distance didn't make the book frustrating or unpleasant for me.

I do have a hard time with Newman's insistence that it's silly and strange for a woman to care whether she gives birth vaginally or via cesarean section, an insistence she repeats a couple times in the book. It's especially tricky given how utterly terrible her automatic-repeat-c-section sounds: the OB who guilt trips her about scheduling a c-section despite the fact that the practice told her she wouldn't be *allowed* a VBAC; the carelessly mixed-up lab appointment; the consent form that sounds to her like 'I will probably die on the table'; the wildly insensitive anesthesiologist; everybody's apparent lack of regard for Newman's fear and crying; the unsettling image of Newman lying alone on a hospital bed, cut open and drugged, while family and friends ignore her and party around the new baby in her hospital room; the physical recovery itself. She describes these situations pretty happily, but they sound really terrible to me.

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### **Eve says**

Everyone should read this book!

This is a funny book about parenting. It is so real, so well-described, so outrageously spot-on! You might be jealous of her amazing perspective and ability to put it all in words, but mostly you'll just be inspired to find new, more hilarious perspective on your own life. Or maybe not. But you'll definitely laugh until you cry. A lot!

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### **Rachael says**

I loved this. I laughed so much, it was cathartic. I think I slept better after reading and laughing. Her style is full of unexpected adjectives, quick turns for the worst and slow upswings for the better. and so honest and sharing. I tried to get Joe to read it, but he didn't like it. Is it really for moms only? I don't know. But I'd recommend to anyone.

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### **Keris says**

Have you ever fallen in love with a book? So in love that you just couldn't stop reading it. Or, if you had to stop, you'd be thinking about it and rushing to get things done so you could get back to it? That was me with Catherine Newman's *Waiting for Birdy* last weekend. (In fact, my husband was getting annoyed that I was talking more about Catherine's son, Ben, than our own son!)

Taken from Catherine's Babycentre blog, it's the story of gorgeous 3-year-old Ben and Catherine's mixed feelings about being pregnant with her second child, Birdy (don't worry, they didn't christen her that). Nothing dramatic or tragic (thankfully) happens, it's just the story of a family or, as the cover puts it "a year of frantic tedium, neurotic angst, and the wild magic of growing a family".

It's just a gorgeous book. It made me cry (repeatedly). It made me laugh (a lot). And sometimes it made me laugh until I cried.

Catherine articulates every single thing I've ever felt about motherhood. How joyful it is. How painful it is. How everything - everything - is bittersweet.

And the best thing is that, now I've finished the book, I've still got years' worth of blog posts to read! Highly, highly, recommended.

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### **John says**

My wife read this while she was pregnant and she was constantly laughing, and the thing is, it is both about having a baby and raising a little kid. And now we have a little kid. So I decided to read it too.

It made me laugh too. I have a lot of the same neurotic tendencies that Catherine Newman has. It made me feel better to know that there are other people out there that guiltily google horrible diseases every time their kid sneezes. Newman says she got slightly less neurotic with the second kid, and I really hope that is the case with me too.

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### **Ciara says**

i heard about this book because the author writes the etiquette column in "real simple". yes, i still read "real simple". & i really like the etiquette column. obviously a memoir about awaiting the birth of a second child while raising a toddler is something that is right up my alley, given my all-consuming obsession with parenting memoirs. can you believe my library didn't have this? i don't know why! it was great! i had to get it as an ebook. not that i regret it at all; i really enjoyed it.

obviously it took me forever to read this because it takes me forever to read everything now that i have a baby. but it was kind of nice because it was good to have a book i was enjoying so much. the best thing about this book is that it is seriously, legitimately funny. obviously i am too fried from baby care (we had our first "vacation" last week, in detroit, which was really just a fun experience in having ramona screaming her face off in someone else's apartment, & we weren't even home for 48 hours when my partner's parents came to

town to meet the baby--they are holding her right now, which is how i'm able to write this) to recall any specific jokes i really liked...there was one about awaiting the milestone of teenagers shooting each other up with heroin that was good. there was another one about doctors recommending that pregnant women exercise caution getting in & out of the shower, "as if you're just doing a crazy vaudeville routine, slipping all over the place when you're not pregnant". you know i love anything related to the possibility of people falling down.

i have read A LOT of parenting memoirs, & this is one of the best. it makes me kind of scared to have another kid, because she writes about how her toddler basically slipped into a clinical depression after his little sister was born, but...whatever. ramona is only four months old now. we have plenty of time before we are even going to be thinking about adding a second kid to the family. (who am i kidding? we're already thinking about it.)

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### **Tricia says**

I like a book that makes my husband laugh. This is one of those books that we kept in the bathroom for a little light reading while doing the do. My husband said one night, "That book in the bathroom is really good. It makes me wish I had to keep shitting just so I can read it." The truth is, I feel the same way. That book makes me wish I had to keep shitting.

(Not bad was the fact that I picked this book up for \$1 at a remainders sale. I feel bad for the author, but at least I went back and bought a couple more copies for my expecting mummy friends.)

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### **Christian says**

Every so often a book comes along that I love so much and can't put down but watch the page numbers turn with sadness because I don't want it to end. I absolutely and truly loved every page of this book. I teared up at points because Newman captured so eloquently the extreme joy and anxiety of mothering, and at other points I was laughing so hard that I could not breath. I have been calling my best friend to read her excerpts of the book because it is hysterical -- in a reality check, oh my god, this is life, type of way. I am ranking this in one of my type 5 favorite books of all time.

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### **Michelle Cynthia says**

I read her memoirs out of order, and this one is from the time in her life when she was expecting and adjusting to her second baby. Newman, in both books, captures motherhood's mix of emotions with such eloquence--fear, joy, exhaustion, indescribable love, etc. Her anecdotes and inner thoughts are also laugh out loud funny at times. Other parts brought tears to my eyes because they were so true and emotional.

I have to share one of my favorite parts that puts in to words these overwhelming feelings we parents feel. Newman's writing helps me focus more on the tiny treasures of the day, but she also acknowledges how draining loving our children can be.

"Sometimes I wonder whether I would have done this--this becoming a parent--if I had known. You know,

known about this love that's like heartbreak...But sometimes my love for these children feels like an affliction--like my heart is in the fist of a beast, and I am utterly helpless. Some tiny thing will catch my attention--Ben quietly watching a squirrel at the feeder, or the way Birdy's lips look while she's sleeping--and that love feeling will start to bang around inside my chest like a huge, flapping bird."

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### **Becky says**

The most accurate perspective on being a mother to an infant that I have ever read. Very funny and sweet in moments, I could relate completely to some of what she said, especially about being neurotic. I had a few favorite parts and it made me want to slow down and try to enjoy Hadley even more. I also need to lose some of my fear and be willing to introduce her to life. It is so well written that at times it was exhausting for me to read because it didn't feel like an escape but the description of the stress I was currently feeling. I am sure I will read this again and again, especially when Hadley is a little talking toddler. Borrow Kim's edited copy!

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### **Kate Baer says**

One of the best parenting books I've ever read. Laughed until I cried.

The exact book I want to write. Jealous.

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### **Aubrey says**

I laughed and cried and told Michael that he needed to read this book to get more insight into my psyche. :) He enjoyed it, too, and laughed a lot himself (I'm gonna guess no crying...). It's a great book for mothers or to-be-mothers, though I also relate to her personality as a woman. Wonderful, wonderful. Love how she captures the everyday.

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### **Katie says**

I've loved Catherine Newman's blog, now called the "Dalai Mama" on Wondertime, since it was "Bringing up Ben & Birdy" on ParentCenter. She is smart, funny and incredibly honest about the joys and hassles of raising young kids. I regularly find myself laughing out loud at the computer screen when reading a blog entry. This book grew out of the blog, and it's every bit as good.

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### **Lain says**

Catherine Newman is the kind of person you want living next door. Funny, irreverent, with a heart as big as the mattress on her family bed. She also is a great writer, with the ability to notice the little things and comment on them in a way that gives them the importance they deserve. Wry, witty, and self-deprecating, Newman tracks her journey to the birth of her second child in "Waiting for Birdy." Nothing -- from the

tangerine-sized hemorrhoids to the "barfy flu" to her sometimes absentminded OB -- escapes her laser-like scrutiny.

If there is a drawback to this book, it's in Newman's recounting of every cute moment and utterance from her preschooler. Everyone thinks their child is the cutest, brightest, most witty -- and reading about her son's latest witticism grew a bit tiresome at times. But he does sound pretty darned cute.

All in all, though, Newman won me over, though I am five years removed from giving birth. It made me long for those delicious baby days, almost enough to give it another try.

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### **Lindsey says**

Meh. This book is overly long and she thinks her kids are way too special. Every child is special. This should have been a personal diary that she kept just for her son to read. She's obsessed and it's kind of annoying. And it made me feel like a bad mom because I don't remember every single second of my kids' lives. Pass.

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### **Carly says**

So tender! So funny. I've followed Catherine Newman's "Ben & Birdy" blog for years now, and have meant to read this book for so long! Finally got around to it, and was not disappointed. I bet this memoir is often compared to Anne Lamott's "Operating Instructions" -- and I bet Catherine Newman anticipated these comparisons in advance (she even quotes "Operating Instructions" in the beginning of the book). I would say the two shouldn't be compared, but rather enjoyed one after the other. Hopeful and cynical. Raw and magical. Devastatingly funny and bittersweet.

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### **Chelsea says**

The author writes about her worries and joys of having two children. I like to read perspectives that don't make me feel guilty/unfit to be a mother. She admits faults in her day to day dealings with her kids but then shows us her inner voice promising herself she will be better... which I can relate to. Anyway a nice motherhood memoir or what have you that isn't so outlandish and crazy for the sake of entertainment, but not too mushy gushy either. And come on, Birdy? How adorable is that?

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