



Bébé Day by Day: 100 Keys to French Parenting

Pamela Druckerman

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A la carte wisdom from the international bestseller Bringing up Bebe

In BRINGING UP BEBE, journalist and mother Pamela Druckerman investigated a society of good sleepers, gourmet eaters, and mostly calm parents. She set out to learn how the French achieve all this, while telling the story of her own young family in Paris.

BEBE DAY BY DAY distills the lessons of BRINGING UP BEBE into an easy-to-read guide for parents and caregivers. How do you teach your child patience? How do you get him to like broccoli? How do you encourage your baby to sleep through the night? How can you have a child and still have a life?

Alongside these time-tested lessons of French parenting are favorite recipes straight from the menus of the Parisian creche and winsome drawings by acclaimed French illustrator Margaux Motin.

Witty, pithy and brimming with common sense, BEBE DAY BY DAY offers a mix of practical tips and guiding principles, to help parents find their own way.

Bébé Day by Day: 100 Keys to French Parenting Details

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Hayley says

Patrick and I both grew up more French than we thought, since our childhoods both involved a lot of these methods. So, adopting them has been quite natural for us, and reading this just gives a name to some of the concepts. I'm a little annoyed by the "geez, stop working for 50/50 equality in the home, put aside your feminism and just lean into the inequality, you'll all be happier" portion, but the child-centric methods make sense and this shortened work is easy to breeze through. I wish the US had the same country-wide support of such methods -- I can imagine it's hard to be the parent letting the kid live their own life at the playground if you're the only one not being super-attentive. Within the framework of French society these seem much more easily adopted. But here, if you're strapped for daycare options, it's a bit harder to demand no cheerios and only a 4PM le goûter.

Overall recommended, although if you're looking for a social viewpoint the longer "*Bringing up Bebe*" would be preferable. If you're not interested in the sociocultural aspect though, this is the better choice.

ThomyZ says

Reading this book (apparently a condensed version of another book by the same author) makes one wonder how Americans raise their children. As a German raised in the 80s and 90s, with a background in early childhood education, there is really nothing groundbreaking about this, and the amount of credit given to the "frenchness" of parenting advice that can mostly be summed up as common sense is irritating.

As for the truly French parenting staple of letting others care for your child once he or she is a few months old: there are quite a few experts at this point who call into question the "benefits" of these methods. Also, the book's messages about gender roles are weirdly antiquated at best.

Courtney Sieloff says

There is much truth in Druckerman's writing. To be fair, I only read her first book and *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. Not reading all of the neurosis-inducing books has kept me a very calm parent, and as my kid approaches his first birthday, I am genuinely glad I read this. I totally recommend. Stop hovering and let your kid explore already.

Brenda says

I LOVE this condensed version of *Bringing up Bebe*. It would be far easier to access something you wanted to quickly lookup something you remembered, including the 100 Keys to French Parenting. For some, it would be unnecessary to have/read *Bringing up Bebe*, which delves into the history and research of what is behind the philosophy of

Mark says

Granted the book is intentionally slim, but there is a surprising lack of depth and explanation for why to parent her recommended way. Then the persistent giving of credit to the "French" like some mystical enlightened people up in the clouds becomes so repetitive it betrays the author and hints to the amount of fluff injected into the book.

The author makes the French out to be some sort of religious figure and the parenting style should be taken on faith.

On the other hand, this book is a fresh counter to the over parenting fad that has hit a certain social class (the ones that read parenting books). Some people in this group haven't yet grown up and realized that parenting isn't easy and the parents are obliged to perform the duties of parents even if it upsets the little ones. The author was spot on when she commented on how some parents try to get social leverage and bonus points for going out of their way to sacrifice for their children.

Trying to raise an "attachment baby" is destructive, especially when the parents keep the child in a family bed for a year, won't let the child cry longer than 10 seconds, and not forgo feedings in the middle of the night after 100 days. Doing this steals away important lessons for how the child can cope with itself and reality. Just as the author says, you have to make hard choices, that will both benefit the child as well as the parents.

The book is okay. I would have liked to see more examples of how to praise and discipline specific child behaviors.

Ashley says

While I am firmly planted in the "Think for yourself, do your own thing" parenting camp, I love the sensibility that the author witnesses in the French people she observes. My husband and I read this book aloud to each other on a long car trip. The book is very short, but we took time to read, process, and then discuss in length the "keys" that the author writes about. We may not be on board with everything (French teenagers have their very own private lives? And even sex lives? Hmmm...) The family-centered, framework-driven, almost laid-back approach to parenting really resonates with us.

Aside from my feelings on Druckerman's philosophy and content, this is a very well organized, very short read that I enjoyed. She outlines keys to French parenting in an instructional fashion, as opposed to the story-telling method she used in her previous book, *Bringing Up Bebe*. It's short, sweet, and can be consumed in small doses.

Michelle Brosi says

I'm not a parent, so it feels a little wrong reviewing a parenting book. Especially when discussing parenting

philosophies are akin to discussing religion or politics. Seems like a big no-no to talk about it, and everyone's defenses rise immediately. But, this book seems to go back to good parenting common sense. Your child is not and should not be the center of your world. There are 100 keys broken down into 10 chapters over a main topic. Pregnancy, babies, sleeping, eating, waiting/patience, conflicts, "free to be you and moi", balance, couple time, and saying Non. I work in a school, so these all made sense to me, but are not what mainstream American families practice. Of course, this may change if I have kids, but for now they seem like good guidelines to strive for.

Dean_o says

Ein kleiner, kompakter Ratgeber für eine bessere Erziehung von Kindern und damit auch für ein entspannteres Zusammenleben.

Ich bin zwar selbst noch kein Vater, aber ich arbeite beruflich mit Kindern bis 6 Jahre.

Das Buch hat mich in meiner vorhandenen Denkweise bestärkt und mich ermutigt sie mit ruhigem Gewissen weiter durchzuführen, auch oder gerade weil man immer wieder Eltern sieht die keiner klaren Struktur folgen und sich von ihren Kindern auf der Nase herumtanzen lassen.

Auch die Kapitel über gesunde Ernährung von früh auf an fand ich sehr interessant. Man erzieht das Kind eben zu ungesundem Essen.

Ich würde diesen kleinen Ratgeber auf jeden Fall an (werdende) Eltern und jeden der sich mit Kindern beschäftigt empfehlen!

Gabrielle says

A practical, no-nonsense (and may I add validating) handbook with 100 tips on how French parenting is different (and more effective) than American parenting styles. Some of my favorites included talking to your baby like an actual person, having the children eat what you eat at mealtimes, allowing lots of time for children to play, and treating children like members of the family, not the central force of it. I found this book refreshing and pragmatic but was disappointed in its one-sidedness. This book was obviously written for mothers and, like most parenting books, assumes the father does not play as important a role. The tips in this book were great but by excluding tips for dads it commits the same error in logic that most parenting books (and styles) do.

Vanessa says

Druckerman is an American raising her three small children in France, and she was struck by the differences between her own American brand of parenting and the French. As a journalist, she set out to investigate the French society that produces "good sleepers, gourmet eaters, and mostly calm parents" in *Bringing Up Bebe*. This book is a distillation of the French parenting lessons she learned, or, "the national conventional wisdom." Druckerman is the first to acknowledge that she is a journalist, not a parenting expert, but her observations were often backed up by parenting research (as you can see in the book's surprisingly lengthy bibliography). As Americans, we have a tendency to think our way is the best--or only--way to do things, but there is much we can learn about parenting from other cultures, including the French. This is not to say that

France is full of perfect parents or children, any more than America is, but there is some wonderful common sense at work in France. I learned a lot about myself as I read, mostly how my ideas about parenting are largely the product of the times--societal beliefs and pressures--many of which are not helpful.

Excerpt from the introduction:

"The main reason why French parenting is relevant to us now is that it's a kind of mirror image of what's been happening in America. We tend to think we should teach kids cognitive skills, such as reading, as soon as possible. They focus on 'soft' skills like socializing and empathy in the early years. We want kids to be stimulated a lot; they think downtime is just as crucial. We often hesitate to frustrate a child; they think a child who can't cope with frustration will grow up miserable. We're focused on the outcomes of parenting; they think the quality of the eighteen years or so you spend living together counts for a lot too. We tend to think long-term interrupted sleep, routine tantrums, picky eating, and constant interruptions are mostly inevitable when you have little kids. They believe these things are--please imagine me saying this in a French accent--*impossible*."

Leanna says

I avoided Bring Up Bebe because, seriously, we're going to make broad generalizations about a whole society's parenting habits again?? Sometimes it seems like the parenting practices echo chamber is just demanding its newest sacrifice. But, I subsequently read so many positive reviews of it that I decided to dip my toe in the water and picked up this (much shorter) book.

And, ok, I don't think the parenting practices advocated herein, or at least most of them, are particularly "French." But they are, at least in my humble opinion, good sense. (Except for the bit in here about thinking of men as just a poor bumbling other species that can't remember child-related things. Because, no. That's both ridiculous and offensive.)

So, yeah! Generally good ideas (with some spectacularly bad ones just to make sure you're still paying attention!) and didn't make me feel judged = three stars. Plus bonus recipes!

Amy Formanski Duffy says

I loved Bringing Up Bebe and this is a little guidebook of the most important tips from that book. It works as a refresher for those who want to follow the author's model of French parenting, or a guide for other caregivers.

I'm reluctant to talk about parenting with anyone nowadays. It seems similar to politics or religion. No matter what your opinion is, someone will disagree with you and get pissed off. So I hesitate to say too much about my opinions. Seriously, people get crazy about parenting philosophies. They're right, and the rest of the world is wrong! :) But I agree with the author that Americans tend to center their world around their children, sometimes to everyone's detriment. The kids sometimes end up thinking they're the center of the universe, or they just don't know how to be independent because they're used to their parents doing EVERYTHING for them.

But whether you agree with all of her opinions or not, I think we can all get behind the idea that kids should be polite, they should be considerate of others, and they need structure. Parents need sleep, alone time, and couple time. You can't let your relationship fall by the wayside. And kids need to develop at their own pace, with some downtime everyday. Being overscheduled will drive the entire family nuts.

So I think she offers a lot of practical tips. Of course, my kid is only 3 months old, so it will be awhile before I can test a lot of these theories. But I dig where she's coming from. I want to raise a confident, independent, polite child.

Yoanna Mladenova says

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Ann says

The full-length book (French Kids Don't Throw Food) was a far more enjoyable read but this was a nice little reminder.

Pauline says

I really liked this book; it's a quick read, with one entry per page and covering 10 aspects of parenting: pregnancy, babyhood, sleep, food, learning, patience, the cadre i.e parenting framework, motherhood, couple relationship and authority.

Some entries really stood out and inspired me(most of the stuff on patience, the cadre and authority), others fit the 'common sense' approach I adhere to anyway, some seemed to address a culture i am clearly not a part of (do some parents really say yes to all their children's demands?), some I disliked and/or disagreed with strongly (No 86 'Fathers are a separate species', is very patronising to men and seems to imply parenting haplessness is to be expected).

But on the whole, a little book I can recommend to people.

I will probably write a fuller review on my blog in the next few days to expand on my most and least favourite entries.
