



Bobblehead Dad: 25 Life Lessons I Forgot I Knew

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An inspirational account of one dad's extraordinary journey through cancer, fatherhood, and several forgotten life lessons--and the discovery of one life-changing gift. Jim Higley was a forty-year-old bobblehead. Just like those collectible figurines with oversized, bouncy heads, he'd put on a smiling face and bobble through his hectic, overflowing days.

Higley's bobbling came to a screeching halt with the diagnosis of cancer, surgery, and a summer of healing. More than a cancer story, however, Bobblehead Dad puts you in a front row seat as the author discovers the illuminating parallels between events in his childhood and his adulthood. Higley, whose weekly fatherhood column appears in the Chicago Tribune's TribLocal, unwraps poignant lessons from his family history with rich, vivid detail. His story reveals meaning in simple moments and the people who fill them--including the surprise discovery of his most important lesson, which had been quietly waiting for over thirty years.

Bobblehead Dad: 25 Life Lessons I Forgot I Knew Details

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Author : Jim Higley

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Amanda says

This is a truly inspiring story of a man that has been diagnosed with cancer and then after surgery on a summer of recovering he is hit by many memories from his childhood. As he reflects on all of the loving memories of his life he is faced with a realization that he has been missing more in his life than he has been actually enjoying and he is forced to decide what he will do with the rest of his life.

I would also like to say I have had to watch many of my family members die from cancer and my dad died by a drunk driver, all before I graduated high school so this story really hit home on a lot of different levels for me. Some of this story was hard for me to read at times, but Jim's description of the emotions he felt during these hard times in his life could not be written any better. This is a story that will have you laughing on one page and crying on the next.

Helen Smith says

A Great Book

This is an amazing way to think through life lessons and see the wonderful traditions of a family. The book is extremely well-written.

Jemma says

Bobblehead Dad was a cover to cover read; I could not put it down. I loved how the author wove his childhood experiences into his present day fight against cancer. Having lost family & friends to cancer, I really related to this book. For anyone who has personally, or knows anyone who has battled cancer, this is a must read. You will laugh, cry, and end feeling lighter & uplifted. Truly inspiring!

Kristin says

I won this book in Goodreads First Reads.

It was a really great and inspiring read and I'm so happy to have had the privilege of reading it. For an ARC it was really well done, easy to read, spelling and grammar were good and most of all it was difficult to put down.

It's easy to forget how lucky we really are and how much our parents really know until it's too late. It was amazing to see life through another person's eyes as he battled with a life threatening disease and read as he battled it to the victorious end. All the while dropping stories of his life and his father and his children.

It woke me up and made me realize the advice my parents have been giving me for years wasn't all useless

paternal nagging and I got new insights from Mr. Higley to add to me lessons to learn and look forward to learning.

I'm recommending this book to family and friends, it's definitely a must read.

Sandy says

“Words can heal. They can surprise. They can encourage. It doesn’t matter if they are handwritten or if a Hallmark had to be leaned on for a little help. Words matter. Because they remind each of us who we are to the people in our lives.” Aren’t these just wonderful words to reflect upon on? These words are just a few of the wonderful statements that Jim enlightens his readers with as we traveled back in time with Jim, when he was a child growing up with his brothers and his parents and also as he shares his battle with cancer and the emotions in both of these arenas. How he connected these situations in each chapter was unique and sometimes confusing to me but nevertheless, I enjoyed the book and it made me appreciate again how wonderful life is and to enjoy it, as it truly is a gift and should be enjoyed. I have read books like this before, the books that give you a prep talk and the author gives you a reflection of their life story but Jim does that with an interesting twist. Each chapter reflects on his childhood, some story of growing up with 4 older brothers and then Jim ends the chapter talking about his battle with cancer and how he deals with it- either with his family or with his siblings. He tries to connect the stories –not a sad book but more of a “get-out-there-and-live-life-to-the-fullest” book. We all need to read these positive, uplifting books.

Sheldon says

Bobblehead Dad by Jim Higley is a nonlinear memoir told in the form of 25 lesson the author has learned during his life. In his forties, the author was diagnosed with prostate cancer and had to take stock of his life, the legacy he was given by his family, and the legacy he would leave to his children. He described himself as a bobblehead in the introduction, a plastic figure who always had a constant smile no matter what influences or stimuli were thrown at him and simply bobbed throughout his day, but that it was still a plastic smile and he wasn't really living. Hence the title of the book.

The lessons are short and seem to be pretty much common sense, although the author acknowledges this near the end of the book. He explains that while most people know these lessons and they may seem easy, they also seem to be difficult to actually put into practice. It would have been better if the author had acknowledged this near the beginning of the book rather than at the end, because it leads to a bit of frustration and forehead slapping.

The author's story is told in a nonlinear style. Each chapter/lesson is divided into two parts. The first is a personal memory, usually of growing up in a house where he was the youngest of five boys. At the age of fourteen, he lost his mother rather suddenly to brain cancer. Later, he lost his father, and then his brother, both to cancer. He shares personal memories of these particular parts of his life. The second part of each chapter involves how these parts influenced his feelings and reactions during the time he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, the time leading up to his surgery, and his recovery. Each chapter concludes with the lesson that he took away these experiences.

There are some distinct problems with *Bobblehead Dad*, the first being the title. Higley describes what he

means by being a bobblehead in the introduction. This is where the problem starts, however. Through the rest of the book, I just don't get it. It didn't make sense as to why or how being a bobblehead related to these lessons. It seems like he forgot what the original motif was shortly after starting it. So, why he chose the title and went to the trouble of describing what he meant in the introduction seemed confusing and ultimately disappointing, like getting literary blue balls.

I can tell what Higley is going for with his nonlinear storytelling in the memoir. It creates an interesting feel, and he's clearly going for the effect of pulling different pieces of his life together like a jigsaw puzzle to use as teachable moments and ultimate lesson that he has at the end of the book. The only problem is that it...just...doesn't...quite...work, at least not for this reviewer. Let me be clear that there's a certain charm to the approach. There definitely is. At the same time, though, it can be frustrating or, at worst, confusing as the reader tries to piece together this life from different non-contiguous and nonlinear parts. It's a style that I found interesting, but it also feels like it needed more time to cook.

Ultimately, *Bobblehead Dad* was not without it's interesting moments or style, and I can't fault Higley for trying something a little new and in a style that's not seen often. It's part memoir and part self-help book. At the same time, it's not without some major problems and at times falls flat, and while the style of the book is interesting, it felt like the style was also experimental needed more time time and editing. My heart goes out to the author and his family for the struggles they've gone through in fighting his cancer and the losses they've suffered. But this book feels like it comes up short in telling of this struggle, which makes it difficult to fully recommend.

Bobblehead Dad earns 2.5 out of 5 stars, although since we can't give half-stars on this system, it gets the benefit of the doubt and gets three stars.

Note: A free Advanced Reader's Copy of this book was sent to this reviewer through a Goodreads First Read giveaway. This did not affect this review in any way.

Joelle says

Bobblehead Dad is not only a story about a man who is diagnosed with cancer and his recovery, it is a story of love and a challenge to love for today. Jim Higley has a way to your heart with his memories from his childhood and entwining them with the present day. A marriage of the past and present that will have you misty eyed by chapter 3 and laughing and shaking your head just picturing the scene in chapter 19. Bobblehead Dad is a must read for anyone who has fought the fight or been a cheerleader on the sidelines. Tucked into these pages are 25 lessons I had forgotten and will hold close to me as I live each day. Thank you Jim for opening your life and your soul for all the masses to know.

Julia says

I was interested in reading this book, in part because of my daughter's battle with leukemia. This book was about a 44 year old man battling prostate cancer, but the emotions brought up with a cancer diagnosis are universal.

The life lessons learned in this book are nothing we all haven't heard before. Enjoy life to its fullest, cherish

every day you have, value family and friends over possessions. We all know we should be doing this, but sometimes it takes something as serious as cancer to remind us.

Each chapter in the book followed a similar format. First an episode from his childhood, then an episode from his adult life. The childhood flashbacks would loosely illustrate a lesson to be learned. At first the constant switching from past to present was distracting. It was hard to get into the narrative flow. But by the end of the book I was comfortable with the time jumps. I did wish that more time was spent on the actual cancer diagnosis and treatment. I would have enjoyed more details. But overall, this was a good book, and I always admire people who have the dedication to tell their own story to others.

Chitoka Webb says

A story about survival that will inspire you. This is one of those books that you will remember fifteen years from now.

Before you know it, Jim's confidence and determination to live as seeped into that portion of doubt that lives within all of us causing it to pulverize. I can assure you, if you read it once you will find yourself reading it twice.

Darlene says

Yay! I won this book on GoodReads First-Reads! I can hardly wait to start reading it. It looks like fun.

* * *

This was a delightful read about some very unfortunate life and death issues. For an ARC it was quite clean, easy to read. If there were mistakes I never noticed them. But dropping into another's life and thoughts helped me see things through another's eyes. That's is how I perceived this book. Jim Higley tells his story of present and past in such a seamless way that I feel a part of his life. I hope and rather assume that there are more chapters in a personal book than in the public book. I'm sure family and friends feel delighted at this edited version. Mr. Higley glossed over issues that might bring embarrassment to others in his life and by doing so kept the picture and lessons clear. Never admitting perfection, Jim made it strictly his story, without becoming preachy.

For a first time author, this flows with character and love. He kept me interested the whole way. Now I wish to see a part two! :)

Passing on to friends. Eventually, I may have to buy myself the Kindle version to read again. Thank you, Jim Higley for sharing your life with us.

Meagan says

I am very impressed by this book. While Higley's perspective on cancer is not incredibly unique, his perspective on life and the connections between events in our lives provides valuable lessons for readers. I believe that the subtitle of the book, the style of writing, and the layout of the book perfectly parallel the

author's intentions, and I appreciate the way that Higley challenges readers without being overly conversational.

Some of the lessons are not unique, but some are articulated in a way that will force readers to consider their own backgrounds, and all of the lessons are well-supported with thoughtful, funny, and thought-provoking anecdotes.

I admire the discipline with which Higley must have examined his own life to find parallels and connections, and I appreciate how well he articulated his observations.

Julie Lorraine says

Bobblehead Dad is an inspirational, fun to read book. It is a quick read that you will not want to put down. When it is finished, you wish it would go on. In a witty way, the book takes you through the author's cancer journey with each step relating back to a childhood memory. It is upbeat, positive and funny! It definitely will make you a better person when you are done reading it. A great idea for Father's Day!

Paisley says

This book was very easy to read. I liked the short chapters with each chapter being a lesson. I feel like this book would be very enjoyable to someone older than me and may appeal more to males. Being a teenage female I didn't relate to this book very well. The author is funny and gives lessons that I believe are great lessons for an older audience. I was bored for most of the book just because I didn't care about the topics. Even so, the writing style is good and I would recommend it to someone like my father (which I did).

Kitty Austin says

JIM HIGLEY'S "BOBBLEHEAD DAD" (REVIEW)

I am in love with Jim Higley and his family. I honestly do not think there is anyone out there that will read this story and not fall in love with the man. I fell in love with his spirit, his warmth, and his overall determination to not only defeat cancer but to keep a positive attitude, learn from the experience and live every day to the fullest. This book is one of a kind, his experience is richly woven in such a way that it keeps you reading. Anyone that reads this book and does not get something positive out of it is simply lost.

I learned from it, I know others will too. The 25 lessons in this book are ones we all should take to heart. By the way, 'Long John Silvers' restaurant holds a few memories for me too!

-Kitty Bullard / Great Minds Think Aloud Book Club

Miri says

This book has a lot of really great messages. It is, however, super dramatically written, and that always makes me a little cynical. Jim Higley uses dramatic writing techniques--like parenthetical dashes--too often, and in places where they don't really make sense grammatically.

He indents--the way writers do for emphasis--far, *far* too often.

For sentences that aren't actually emphatic.

Like this one.

That is my primary complaint. As far as the story goes, it's nothing earth-shattering, but it is a lovely narrative about a man coming through a terrible experience, and it included a lot of passages that made me feel how special life is. Since it's so short, I don't mind recommending it (especially since most aren't as easily annoyed as I am by silly style things). The message is beautiful, and I enjoyed reading it.

I won this copy through Goodreads First Reads.
