



Hatching Charlie: A Quest for Happiness and Meaning

Charles C. McCormack , Keeley Thomas (Photographer)

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Hatching Charlie is an absorbing autobiography written from a psychologically insightful point of view. Within its pages, the reader will undertake the sweeping journey of the author's life, from beginnings in family violence to encounters with racism in the Jim Crow South, to enduring the tumult of frequent moves as part of an Army family to exile to a boarding school in France at age 11. The reader will struggle along with McCormack as the cratering impact of his tumultuous childhood plays itself out in his young adulthood and beyond. Forever feeling like a cog in someone else's universe, he takes to lashing out like a punch-drunk fighter via petty delinquencies and failures, as he fights to exclaim his existence. Then in repudiation of what he experiences as an overly-impinging reality, he goes on an indefinite camping trip in blind search of self. After many adventures, in Mexico and the Mid-West, McCormack finally discerns what he wants to do with his life. Feeling purpose-driven for the first time, he looks forward to a straighter path: He does not hear God laughing.

In this sweeping story, Hatching Charlie deals with the human condition: The nature of love and loving, life and relationships, single parenthood, divorce, mental illness, and suicide with humor and wisdom.

Throughout Charlie grapples to make sense of things, to squeeze meaning from his experiences and in the process gets ever closer to understanding himself. As you read about Charlie's "road less traveled" you'll come to understand more of your own.

Hatching Charlie: A Quest for Happiness and Meaning Details

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From Reader Review Hatching Charlie: A Quest for Happiness and Meaning for online ebook

Wayne Kigerl says

Climb aboard Charlie's magical couch—have a beer, probably Freudian Stout—and enjoy the psychoanalytical ride of your life. Lay back and get into his mind; meet his wives, lovers, friends, co-workers, demons, children, and peers; share his accomplishments and failures; hopes and fears: a story of pain, joy, and self-discovery that unfolds with a clarity that few can match. Perhaps he should be committed.

No, that is the sort of joke only a friend can make. We were lifeguards together on a Maryland ocean beach, where he sort of saved me, once. I also worked in the mental health field at the Presidio, US Army—so I appreciate the challenges, accomplishments, and likely egg-tooth he was born with that enabled him to never quit, to emerge and finally take flight in that most personal of professions—psychotherapy.

To some, his journey may seem unconventional—a free-associative, flight-of-fancy, over the years, that necessitated the conquering of many hurdles, some of his own making, others the foible finger of fate—a military father failing to confront his own demons.

Nevertheless, with Charlie's creative, inquisitive, expressive, and imaginative mind, I believe his writing will firmly garner him a place in medical history as the Oscar Wilde of Psychotherapy—his story unfolds like beautiful Salome's (Wilde's tragic play and more recent Tom Robbins' novel) in which a dancer peels off each of her seven veils, until she is wearing little or nothing. As each veil drops, she comes to an epiphany about life.

In a way, Charlie's story reads like a well-performed strip-tease—the sequined reflections of his fifty-year psychotherapeutic voyage take the reader through a kaleidoscopic journey into the sacred and profane, past many blessed and tortured realms, and eventual rapprochement with his “self”—family, wisdom, peace, transparency, and a final boat ride.

For anyone who wants to understand the challenges, rewards, and sometimes tragedies inherent in a mental health career, I cannot imagine a more revealing story.

Coming from a itinerate military family; shuffled in various schools, states, and countries; disciplined with a harsh military code of justice, overcoming a beginning as an 11-year old abandoned expatriate waif in a French boarding school; functioning as a barely focused Virginia college undergraduate, Charlie experiments, marries, mingles, travels, has children, finds his love of learning, gets a job as a social worker, endures the heart break of divorce, while fully invested in the fates of patients, some who fall by the wayside, victims of a system that sometimes acts—mechanically, bureaucratically, and corporately—bottom-line-dollar-broken and uncaring. Despite this, Charlie wades into the maelstrom, and somehow...and, I repeat...somehow...like a swimmer surfacing from crashing waves—never quits caring—and builds a successful career as a psychotherapist.

Rarely has the mental health realm been presented with such serious and yet irreverent, humane, and honest treatment. Through it all, Charlie perseveres, renews and rejoices; is true to himself, his patients and family.

Perhaps, regarding Charlie's legacy, Oscar Wilde is again worthy of mention. His tomb, constructed in Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France, is engraved with a verse from the Ballad of Reading Gaol by Wilde

bequeathed to outcast men:

And alien tears will fill for him
Pity's long-broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn.

Unless, of course, they hop in the boat and head into the blue, their minds returning to the sea.

Catherine says

Interesting memoir giving insight into life's realities. I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

Jacques McCormack says

Full disclosure. I am Jacques, Charlie's slightly older brother referred to glowingly, and sometimes not so glowingly, in portions of his work.

Having finished "Hatching Charlie" and having put it down, I had the undeniable sensation that somehow that nemesis of my youth had had me miniaturized and placed on his shoulder and, following that, had the audacity to suggest that we set out together to reconnoiter his life experiences. Frankly, not an overly compelling proposition. We had, after all, shared a nontrivial portion of those same experiences so it would be like seeing a rerun wouldn't it? Not on your life!

What a trip it was! Yes, there were times as he chronicled the past that I found myself saying "wait a minute! I don't remember it that way!" or maybe "Give me a break, aren't you being a tad overly dramatic!?"

That said, with me ensconced firmly on his shoulder, our journey progressed and my protestations waned. This because it did not take long to appreciate and admire the honesty and passion that Charlie brought to the task of informing, challenging and entertaining his reader. Because of those traits many well remembered scenes passed before my eyes, but for the first time I was seeing them through my brother's. Quite an experience.

Well, having finished "Hatching Charlie" I wanted to report that event to him. The subject line of the email was simply "Wow!" and my note read:

Klaus (family nickname),

Over dinner tonight, at one of my go to local restaurants, I finished Hatching. What a great read. I enjoyed it, learned from it, critiqued it ... all on multiple levels, but most importantly I appreciated it. Beautifully written (e.g. I read the ending three times) and honest beyond belief! Really very well done and for what it is worth I couldn't be more proud of you!

Erin Daniels says

I wanted to love this book but couldn't completely get on board with some of the author's choices. I found the racial slurs to be very offensive and I am not sure why the author didn't take this into account. I understand that a memoir requires you to tell the unfiltered truth about the past, even when it's unpleasant, but the author is writing in the present day and some of his language was his own and not quotes from other people. To come across these slurs was shocking, disheartening and took me completely out of the story. That is the real shame because *Hatching Charlie* was otherwise a fascinating page turner. The author's life was interesting and compelling enough to fill several books in my opinion and his narrative skill is excellent. My only other issue was that the author seems to imply that attitude affects mental outcomes and a conscientious effort to frame unfortunate life events can mitigate emotional harm. I personally feel this mode of thinking is dangerous because it makes people with emotional or psychological imbalances feel that if they're unwell it's because they're looking at things all wrong. So if you're willing to see this book as an engrossing look at one man's fascinating and incredibly interesting life you won't be disappointed.

Fran says

Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale

Sometimes when you look at your reflection in a mirror you see someone that is wonderful, successful or perfect in your own eyes. But, what is hidden behind your eyes, the fear, the anger, the torment is never truly revealed unless you look deeper, longer and see what's hiding behind your lack of expression, your glaring eyes as they begin to recall your childhood torments, lack of accomplishments growing up, unrest caused by a tyrannical and abusive parent and the hopes and fears that someday you as a person will be accepted as you are. How do you change your look? How does your demeanor take on another appearance, how do you find yourself when others look at you and only see failure, differences you can't help but cope with and the joy of life has gone out of you as people who see your expressionless face and cold and staring eyes will see as you begin to unravel the mystery behind you and share it with the world. Meet Charlie McCormack and hear his voice, shed his tears, feel his pain and understand his frustrations as he tells you his story in his own terms from youth to adulthood and in between. This is not an ordinary memoir beginning with a young child growing up in the 50's describing his experiences living in fear of an abusive father, in an abusive family where the lack of warmth, constant critics and unusual punishment loomed over his head on a daily basis. Placed in a boarding school where the abuse continued at the hand of a priest followed by many incidents during his childhood where his father beat his brother and him without feeling or mercy. The author relates his many interactions with students in his school being placed a year ahead of his age, the difficulties he faced, the ridicule, the antics he pulled trying to steal a copy of a final and getting ratted out by someone who wanted him to cough one up too. His father's constant abuse, his mother not able to deal with many situations and then finally moving to Germany and other places and having to cope with no friends, loneliness and the demands of his father. When finally he does graduate high school and he decides to try other jobs his journey is not one that came easy as stealing, lies, drinking and doing reckless things became his mantra. But, not everyone stays adrift and when he meets Jane and they finally begin to settle down will

he realize that he is now responsible for another person as we get to know Charlie after finding his way to become a psychotherapist. What happens when his son Chandler is about to be born is priceless and his love for him endearing. Introducing him to his new sibling and then finding himself in need of a way to support his family before getting his first internship. Charlie is real, his personality unique, his stories well told and his ups and downs described make him human and closer to the reader. Deciding on his path took time, the army and many other stumbling and roadblocks until he realized that he could help others that might be going through the same trials he did before reaching his goals. Dealing with people, different personalities is not easy and teaching readers by talking about his profession in a way we can all grasp and understand is what makes this book or memoir stand out.

In chapter 17 he focuses on the compassion others showed him and the fact that they never mocked or ridiculed him. Even the medical director, Bill Abramson, MD, not the nicest person on this planet, still managed to hold his tongue and not make him feel small. He provided supervision for him and later he even invited him to his home to give him so old toys that belonged to his grown children for his son Chandler. Even though there were cutbacks and his position was no longer full time, they kept him on a researcher. Balancing his career and his life was not easy but as he states the idea was to help people “access the healing powers of stimulation and enjoyment in human connection, but this went against the more traditional and conservative notions of the therapist and patient relationship.”

Imagine working for someone named Ms. Glum and having to deal with the census, answers and not getting along with this person. If reasons we won’t divulge he called her Ms. Glum you can imagine what they means. In Chapter 19 he tells us about getting his Social Work Degree and three more years as the Program Director of Sheppard-Pratts Evening Treatment Program where our author felt the need to expand his horizons. The chapter discusses his career as a family therapist, which did not start off as a huge smash hit. More obstacles and more course work and then in chapter 20 Outpatient to in-patient to Im-Patient. I’ll let you read it and figure it out! This memoir brings to light just how someone can rise above the obstacles, disasters, the people that hindered him and find himself as a well known therapist who is understanding, realizes his limitations and might even come to terms with his father and his military way of dealing with him as we meet him when his children get married, becoming a father in law and then touring Italy with his father, dealing with his mother’s terminal illness, his mother’s critique of how Christine was raising her children and then taking a drastic step realizing that he had to make a choice whether to deal with his parents who deal with abuse.

Being a grandfather must be the greatest thing for Charlie. His picture does not exactly describe him as you can tell at the start of Chapter 33. Grandparents are patients but he knows little about that as he did about being a father. Never having grandparents he had no one to compare himself to and after his children were born he did have more of a relationship with his parents. Remembering his time as a dad with Chandler and not allow him or his mother to walk him to the mall to buy something he wanted. Independent you might say. The rest of the chapter tells more about his other grandchildren, their relationships and their love for Oma Jane. But, on grandchild Stella, gave him a real run as she was rude and disrespectful and he would not and show not deal with that. He could not inflict a consequence so he became cold and withdraws as we meet Jonny The Hitman McCormack age two and a half. Learn more about him and why the name and more as you read the remainder of this chapter. Why Change is Difficult rounds out Chapter 36 and talking about the human brain as a friend and foe. The brain develops habituated ways of thinking and felling that we use to connect both to the external and our sense of self. As a child it is not only dramatic events that shape us but the as he states the abiding emotional ambiance, the feelings that link us to our parents, siblings and ultimately the world. Learning to deal with feelings that we are unsure of or unaccustomed to that threaten to overthrow our most implicit beliefs. This can cause as he states disorganization. Change is difficult as we know and the human brain poses many roadblocks and obstacles. Understand how the brain protects us using psychological defenses to protect us from psychological distress. The remainder of this chapter explains it all in more detail. The final chapter titled Au Revoir focuses on how you have grown, leaving home and created your own life with your own family. He enjoys living his life in solitude or at least he tries. Janet is around

but most days they do their own thing and come together for other activities like boat rides, cards and more. He sums himself up perfectly on page 400 the last paragraph. Read this heartfelt memoir and meet Charlie, his parents, siblings, children, grandchildren and those he counsels and the final page which bring tears to your eyes as the author decides his next move as he hears his mother calling: HAVE A GOOD LIFE! Charlie has finally been Hatched and Feels so alive.

Read this compelling journey of this interesting psychotherapist. Take the journey now!

Fran Lewis: Just reviews/MJ Magazine

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J.P. Willson says

This is a book I knew I would enjoy simply from the title alone. Even considering I had no idea of what the content would be yet, before reading the excerpt, simply from the title alone I was aware I would gain inspiration from this book.

And this I certainly did, much much more than I could have ever imagined.

This is a wonderfully presented autobiographical account of a mans life from every possible angle one can imagine. Good bad and just plain middle of the road stuff that each and every person goes through in their own lives and in their own respective fashions. Most, as is related in the book countless times, without any such knowledge of what they are experiencing or why.

Simply stated the average individual does not look at themselves in such a light as to discover within themselves how to become a better, richer, and fuller person by way of self-exploration and really, self-renewal throughout their lives.

Written in a very self-deprecating yet humorous tome, it comes apparent quickly that the author has fully left himself vulnerable to the world with no concern whatever to what may come. And why should he? I guess you'll need to read the book to arrive at that answer for yourself.

The knowledge I have gained is enormous. Being on my own journey of self-exploration for the last three years or so I found this book so relate-able to so many questions and ideas and theories I myself have come up with . Why it is my life is the way it is? Why have I come to this place in my life? Why should I continue this re-examination of all things that are my life....and how shall I continue along this road? Is this all there is? I am the only person that can answer these questions fully and completely.

Personally I have been able to use this as a self-help tool even though I do not believe that was the author's intent.

Written in a narrative that I found quite compelling and witty. The analogies abounded to his experiences and were so eloquent in their placements it was a joy to read.

I am going to recommend this to my own counselor and life coach among many others..

Dominique Kyle says

It was the title of this book that caught my eye – ‘Hatching Charlie’. Either this was a book about animal psychology (along the lines of Konrad Lorenz who allowed a nest of hatching goslings imprint on him and had to spend weeks waddling along in a crouching position at their head to enable them to grow up!) or, more likely given the picture on the front of a man and a baby – a human psychology book. Either way, the title had me hooked already.

At the present moment, I am locked in a very small room (mostly alone) with my significant other for nigh on six months – like some bizarre lab rat experiment. Except we did it to ourselves. Voluntarily!

Occasionally we get a moment or two of internet and I send some smoke signals out – dot dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot. And get a drop or two of refreshing connectedness signalled back. One of the things I got back was this book. Quite timely really, which was why I put off reading it until I was ready to. It reminded me that the two of us were engaged in this primordial dance of humanity to emerge into consciousness and that it is inevitably painful. When other people have expressed envy of our present position, I’ve said, “Well I’ll let you know if the relationship survives and if we both crawl out alive at the end,” and they’ve laughed heartily. But I’m not joking... Like the Scottish radio continuity moment the other day when two male presenters were reminiscing about whether they had Paddington Bear or Thomas the Tank Engine duvet covers and the woman joined in by commenting acerbically, ‘I just got put in a draw and told to shut up and go to sleep!’ The other two laughed and I thought – ‘she’s not joking you know...’

So for moments we stand united on the deck – the only tiny boat as far as the eye can see in the whole Hebridean sea wrapped up in twenty layers of clothing against the Scottish ‘summer’ having made our passage plans based on a confidently forecast wind direction that never turned up, stamping rhythm and singing loudly along to Pink Floyd, with me staring fascinated at the speakers ‘did I really just hear the line ‘the lunatic lies on the grass’? (I don’t listen to music much – it mostly makes me want to beat my brains out against a wall – but maybe my brain’s not connected right or something?!) and then we duck inside and have an almighty, petty-on-the-surface argument, that has a dangerous under-tow that is threatening our individual self-hoods so deeply that we are both despairing unto death. So yes, a bit of companionship on the journey by a fellow servant, believing human via Charlie was very welcome. I wouldn’t say it was a particularly comforting book. When I got to the end I had a dream that night that the little lamb running, hopping and skipping ahead of me over the fells tripped over so many rocks and had to jump down from so many stone walls that when it faltered and stopped ahead of me and I waved it to go on, it got miserable and exhausted and laid down and said it had had enough. Thus was my hope nearly extinguished. Then the next day as I felt really down and we had another big row, I prayed to God to intervene to bring something, anything, out of this to advance the situation as I felt beyond being able to do it myself. And suddenly the Other said, “What do you want to say to me?” Mindful of Charlie’s wife, who had tried to tell him for so long to be rebuffed by deaf ears (sound familiar female readers?) and his complaint that her voice was too soft (bet it wasn’t, bet it would have been plenty clear enough if he’d been willing/ready to listen), but when finally listened to, she had so much to say that it completely overwhelmed Charlie, I didn’t answer at first, wondering what part of it to say. Finally I bit off a small digestible chunk, and presented it to him. He received it, found it processable and we ended up being able to agree on a method to intervene in pointlessly burgeoning arguments that meets both our divergent needs. Result! My lamb should be dancing a fandango, but my dreams last night were extremely political in nature – and thus the symbolism (and the psychic work) ever moves on...

So basically this book starts at birth and continues with his journey towards selfhood up unto the present day (around Dec 19th). Sorry, I forgot to say that I’ve been viewing this book like an advent calendar...windows into a soul from day one onwards. But if Dec 24th is perhaps only achieved as we pass through the pearly gates, maybe none of us can much progress beyond the 19th until we are very near the end and ready enough to let go of our own egos to go on into the twenties trailing a blaze of comet-like illumination, ready to repeat

fiercely and insistently to those loved ones still engaged in opening earlier windows that they must feel free to have a good life, while they themselves are hopefully willing to shout a generous 'Bon Voyage' back to us.

Charles McCormack says

If you've ever wanted to read someone's diary, be a fly on the wall during a private exchange, or wondered what someone, possibly your therapist, really, really thinks then *Hatching Charlie* will roundly satisfy that curiosity. It's a fascinating read if you just leave it at that, but, in doing so, you'd miss a rare invitation to be guided through elements of your own personal story on a parallel plane.

This book will take you on the life trajectory of one talented psychotherapist, who with candor, humor, spice, and great self-reflection tells how he "hatched" himself to find his professional calling, after many detours that could have meant a permanent derailing. He also reveals his own personal relationship struggles in the universal attempt to find love. In so doing, he offers hope to us all when we flounder and can't, for the moment, see a clear and promising path forward.

He generously shares the details of a psychologically lonely youth of disrupted attachments due to constant moving and the callousness of a narcissistic father. We agonize with him through an excruciating banishment, at 11 years old, to a boarding school in France where sadism seems to be the guiding principle. He portrays, through the lens of his own hard-won experience, the scars and challenges created in soldiering through childhood alone. In this way, he connects the dots to his adult life and empathizes with all of us humans who, more or less, must pass through from childhood to adult and find our own individual way.

It is an inspiring memoir about how one person grappled with fear and isolation, and through the alchemy of self-understanding, forged a far more gratifying adult pathway. His sharing of his experiences as a therapist on an in-patient, long-term psychiatric unit alone is worth the read.

For anyone desiring to be touched by one individual's journey in wrangling with the great questions of life, in the hope some of your own might be illuminated, this is a wonderful and wise book. Written with humor, humility, clinical expertise and a loving respect for life and the human condition, *Hatching Charlie* heroically breaks new ground in the autobiography genre.

Charles McCormack says

"*Hatching Charlie: A Quest for Happiness and Meaning*" is the 2nd edition of "*Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale*." This edition is over 40,000 words shorter, and some stories have been added, while others have been taken away. Almost every remaining sentence has been rewritten. All this has been in response to my reviewers' comments and my feeling that the first edition did not meet my own ambitions for conveying clearly, powerfully, and without redundancy that which I wished to convey. This edition does that and I think you will find it powerful, moving, touching, sometimes humorous and sometimes frightening, and an overall enthralling read about human and family issues that create obstacles for everyone in their pursuit of happiness and meaning

My thanks to the readers who have taken the time to share their thoughts; I didn't take them lightly.
Charles McCormack, MA, MSW, LCSW-C

Michelle says

Written by Charles McCormack, “Hatching Carlie: A Psychotherapist Tale” is a thoughtful engaging memoir of the life and times of a deeply caring and compassionate healer/therapist. In 1974, Charlie accepted a volunteer position at Sheppard Pratt Hospital, Baltimore, MD. (est.1853-). This hospital was recognized as the oldest more advanced psychiatric treatment hospitals in the nation. With no experience, and marginal college success, Charlie discovered his true calling working with troubled and disturbed psychiatric patients and facilitating their path to improved mental health and wellness.

The second of five siblings, Charlie’s father was a Army artillery officer, and emulated his war hero Douglas McArthur. Discipline was often harsh and severe, as Charlie and his siblings feared their father’s temper and wrath. As a child, Charlie was perplexed by the racism in Montgomery, Alabama—the separate drinking fountain’s for “whites” and “colored” people. When he was eleven, he was sent to College St. Etienne in France-- a boarding school for 18 months. His brothers had also been there, he didn’t understand the French language or why his parents had abandoned him, never visiting. In 1963, his father received orders to return stateside where the entire family moved from Heidelberg, Germany.

Never fully interested in school, Charlie was kicked out of one college, and fired from numerous jobs. Fortunately, he had the connections of a family friend and gained admission to Loyola, which is now a prominent University. In 1972, he married his first wife Jane. Over the course of their long marriage, they had 3 children. With the pressure Charlie felt building his professional career with the demands of fatherhood and family life, Charlie noted it was too easy to pass the blame. Jane was admitted for inpatient care, as he and Jane struggled to keep their marriage and family life intact. Eventually they divorced. Charlie, a hopeless romantic, remarried fairly quickly to a beautiful complex woman, and his second marriage would end in divorce as well. As a marriage and family therapist, Charlie readily shared and discussed the difficulties and problems he encountered in his marriages, and how he came to terms with them and met the challenges of family life.

On His 30th birthday, Charlie graduated from Maryland University on January 13, 1980. A master’s degree allowed him to practice psychotherapy, though without the pay and prestige of a psychologist. Team meetings discussing patient care were sometimes confrontational: (Charlie writes) “The psychiatrists in particular, had cherished egos and would posture intellectually like roosters. Add to this, the heated arguments that would occasionally break-out among professional sub-groups and the result was an atmosphere more driven by emotional agenda than one might expect among such a polished group of mental health professionals.” The problems of mental health care delivery began to decline as state asylums and mental hospitals began to empty wards, with a preference for outpatient care in community clinics. Managed care (HMO’s) assumed the role of providing services forcing practitioners and providers to deal with complicated insurance claims, payments and paperwork. Many patients were forced into homelessness.

This memoir covers decades of Charlie’s life, and is often written in a stream-of –consciousness style that explore thoughts and emotions. While this is truthful and revealing, the writing seems to ramble if the reader should lose interest. A good editor will catch this. There are many stories about his happy third marriage, family life and the therapeutic benefits of a writer’s life and meaning for readers. Charlie has written a follow-up memoir that will be released soon.

Winter Sophia Rose says

Intriguing, Powerful, Insightful, Compelling, Fantastic Read! I Loved It!

Fran says

Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale

Sometimes when you look at your reflection in a mirror you see someone that is wonderful, successful or perfect in your own eyes. But, what is hidden behind your eyes, the fear, the anger, the torment is never truly revealed unless you look deeper, longer and see what's hiding behind your lack of expression, your glaring eyes as they begin to recall your childhood torments, lack of accomplishments growing up, unrest caused by a tyrannical and abusive parent and the hopes and fears that someday you as a person will be accepted as you are. How do you change your look? How does your demeanor take on another appearance, how do you find yourself when others look at you and only see failure, differences you can't help but cope with and the joy of life has gone out of you as people who see your expressionless face and cold and staring eyes will see as you begin to unravel the mystery behind you and share it with the world. Meet Charlie McCormack and hear his voice, shed his tears, feel his pain and understand his frustrations as he tells you his story in his own terms from youth to adulthood and in between. This is not an ordinary memoir beginning with a young child growing up in the 50's describing his experiences living in fear of an abusive father, in an abusive family where the lack of warmth, constant critics and unusual punishment loomed over his head on a daily basis. Placed in a boarding school where the abuse continued at the hand of a priest followed by many incidents during his childhood where his father beat his brother and him without feeling or mercy.

The author relates his many interactions with students in his school being placed a year ahead of his age, the difficulties he faced, the ridicule, the antics he pulled trying to steal a copy of a final and getting ratted out by someone who wanted him to cough one up too. His father's constant abuse, his mother not able to deal with many situations and then finally moving to Germany and other places and having to cope with no friends, loneliness and the demands of his father. When finally he does graduate high school and he decides to try other jobs his journey is not one that came easy as stealing, lies, drinking and doing reckless things became his mantra. But, not everyone stays adrift and when he meets Jane and they finally begin to settle down will he realize that he is now responsible for another person as we get to know Charlie after finding his way to become a psychotherapist. What happens when his son Chandler is about to be born is priceless and his love for him endearing. Introducing him to his new sibling and then finding himself in need of a way to support his family before getting his first internship. Charlie is real, his personality unique, his stories well told and his ups and downs described make him human and closer to the reader. Deciding on his path took time, the army and many other stumbling and roadblocks until he realized that he could help others that might be going through the same trials he did before reaching his goals. Dealing with people, different personalities is not easy and teaching readers by talking about his profession in a way we can all grasp and understand is what makes this book or memoir stand out.

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powers of stimulation and enjoyment in human connection, but this went against the more traditional and conservative notions of the therapist and patient relationship.”

Imagine working for someone named Ms. Glum and having to deal with the census, answers and not getting along with this person. If reasons we won’t divulge he called her Ms. Glum you can imagine what they means. In Chapter 19 he tells us about getting his Social Work Degree and three more years as the Program Director of Sheppard-Pratts Evening Treatment Program where our author felt the need to expand his horizons. The chapter discusses his career as a family therapist, which did not start off as a huge smash hit. More obstacles and more course work and then in chapter 20 Outpatient to in-patient to Im-Patient. I’ll let you read it and figure it out! This memoir brings to light just how someone can rise above the obstacles, disasters, the people that hindered him and find himself as a well known therapist who is understanding, realizes his limitations and might even come to terms with his father and his military way of dealing with him as we meet him when his children get married, becoming a father in law and then touring Italy with his father, dealing with his mother’s terminal illness, his mother’s critique of how Christine was raising her children and then taking a drastic step realizing that he had to make a choice whether to deal with his parents who deal with abuse.

Being a grandfather must be the greatest thing for Charlie. His picture does not exactly describe him as you can tell at the start of Chapter 33. Grandparents are patients but he knows little about that as he did about being a father. Never having grandparents he had no one to compare himself to and after his children were born he did have more of a relationship with his parents. Remembering his time as a dad with Chandler and not allow him or his mother to walk him to the mall to buy something he wanted. Independent you might say. The rest of the chapter tells more about his other grandchildren, their relationships and their love for Oma Jane. But, on grandchild Stella, gave him a real run as she was rude and disrespectful and he would not and show not deal with that. He could not inflict a consequence so he became cold and withdraws as we meet Jonny The Hitman McCormack age two and a half. Learn more about him and why the name and more as you read the remainder of this chapter. Why Change is Difficult rounds out Chapter 36 and talking about the human brain as a friend and foe. The brain develops habituated ways of thinking and felling that we use to connect both to the external and our sense of self. As a child it is not only dramatic events that shape us but the as he states the abiding emotional ambiance, the feelings that link us to our parents, siblings and ultimately the world. Learning to deal with feelings that we are unsure of or unaccustomed to that threaten to overthrow our most implicit beliefs. This can cause as he states disorganization. Change is difficult as we know and the human brain poses many roadblocks and obstacles. Understand how the brain protects us using psychological defenses to protect us from psychological distress. The remainder of this chapter explains it all in more detail. The final chapter titled Au Revoir focuses on how you have grown, leaving home and created your own life with your own family. He enjoys living his life in solitude or at least he tries. Janet is around but most days they do their own thing and come together for other activities like boat rides, cards and more. He sums himself up perfectly on page 400 the last paragraph. Read this heartfelt memoir and meet Charlie, his parents, siblings, children, grandchildren and those he counsels and the final page which bring tears to your eyes as the author decides his next move as he hears his mother calling: HAVE A GOOD LIFE! Charlie has finally been Hatched and Feels so alive.

Read this compelling journey of this interesting psychotherapist. Take the journey now!

Fran Lewis: Just reviews/MJ Magazine

The turbulent 1960s follow, in which McCormack is expelled from college for drug use and later goes on a trip of personal discovery with his girlfriend across North America and Mexico in a VW Beetle. The couple has a frightening showdown with the Mexican police—followed by a fortuitous encounter when their car breaks down and a car mechanic who was once a Ph.D. psychologist rescues them.

Upon returning to the United States, McCormack studies to become a psychotherapist and thrives. However, there are dark moments along the way. Personal and professional successes and failures. He suffers from PTSD following the suicide of one patient, must physically throw himself at another to prevent her from slashing her wrists, and when his marriage ends in divorce, he also must confront the demons of his childhood which come forward with terrifying intensity.

McCormack—a well-reputed psychotherapist—must then face his own issues with love and loving, and his changing identity as he confronts the challenges of fatherhood and grand fatherhood, and then partial retirement. All along the way, McCormack offers valuable insights speaking with an authority that arises from years of personal self-reflection and self-accountability, along with the experience gained in over forty years as an individual and couples therapist. Unflinchingly, McCormack shares raw and personal examples of how we each can come to live self-limiting lives and become the principal barriers to our own happiness. Given McCormack's creative, inquisitive, expressive, and imaginative mind, his story unfolds like a dancer peeling her seven veils, as each veil drops she comes to an epiphany about life, standing near naked at the end. *Hatching Charlie* takes the reader into the sacred and profane, past many blessed and tortured realms, into the challenges, rewards, and sometimes tragedies inherent in a mental health career and, truth be told, in life itself you've ever wanted to read someone's diary, be a fly on the wall during a private exchange, or wondered what someone, possibly your therapist, really, really thinks then *Hatching Charlie* will roundly satisfy that curiosity. It's a fascinating read

J.B. Trepagnier says

This is overall, a good tale about overcoming a hard childhood that ranged from an abusive father and never putting down roots from moving around often and eventually finding your place in the world and your own happiness. You read the author's struggles from boyhood to adulthood, finding relationships, ending relationships, and having children.

I think the one thing that turned me off a little was some of the racial language in the book early on. Words like coloreds get used often and the N word is used at least once. There was a joke in there that may have been a personal inside joke among the family that his African American son in law was "whiter than he was", but there was no context to it that it was an inside joke and it could have been taken wrong, which I did a little. While I understand this was what the language the author knew when he was at the age, I might have felt differently if those chapters have been told with say, a 6-8 year old narrators voice that doesn't know better. The entire book is read from the perspective of a psychotherapist analyzing their past and childhood. So the voice that is using those terms is a grown man, not a young boy who only knows those terms. Maybe I took it the wrong way, but I'm mixed race and live in an area where people sometimes do use those terms to cause harm and they are just hot button words to me.

Alan says

i won this book recently in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

This was interesting and something totally different from what I usually read. I rarely write what a book is about for fear of spoiling for others, but I do recommend.

Neil Carstairs says

Hatching Charlie is at times a very interesting read, this comes from the engaging way that the author gives voice to his personal history, struggles and successes. It needs to be an honest approach, otherwise it will fail on all fronts. The reader must understand where Charles C McCormack has come from; this includes sometimes difficult to read passages on family life (particularly the young Charlie's relationship with his father), life in 1950s USA with its racial segregation and subsequent life in Europe as his father's military career takes him overseas.

The author's work in the psychiatric field, something I got the impression he almost fell into by accident, shows the stress that mental health care professionals come under. Dysfunctional families and suicidal patients are encountered daily and the ability to cope with this as well as personal struggles of marriage and divorce earn my respect every time.

Hatching Charlie combines social history with a study of psychoanalysis and McCormack writes with honesty and warmth that will draw the reader in to his life experiences.
