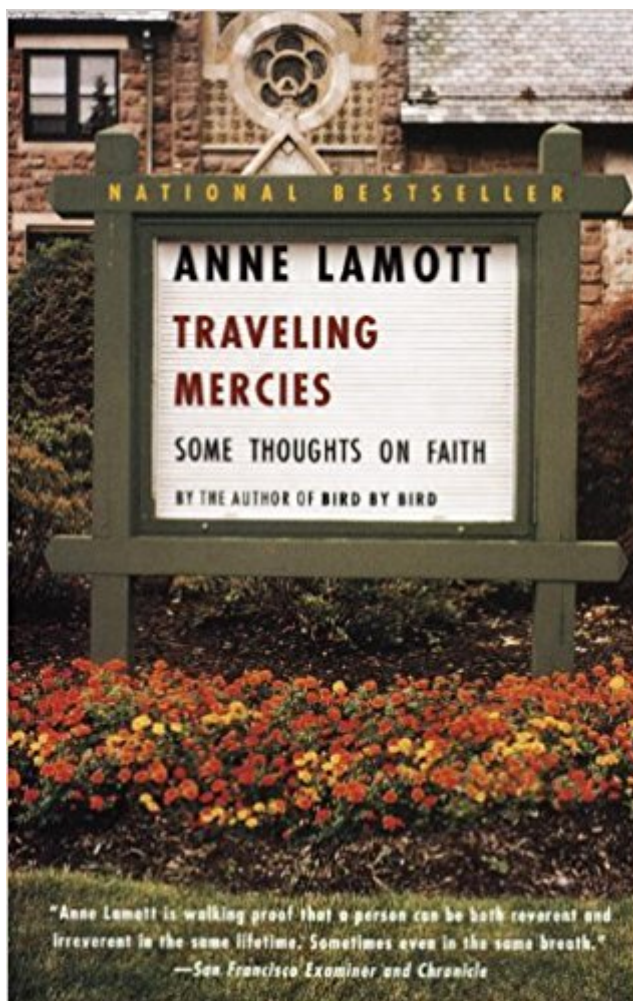


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Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts On Faith



Synopsis

Anne Lamott claims the two best prayers she knows are: "Help me, help me, help me" and "Thank you, thank you, thank you." She has a friend whose morning prayer each day is "Whatever," and whose evening prayer is "Oh, well." Anne thinks of Jesus as "Casper the friendly savior" and describes God as "one crafty mother." Despite--or because of--her irreverence, faith is a natural subject for Anne Lamott. Since *Operating Instructions* and *Bird by Bird*, her fans have been waiting for her to write the book that explained how she came to the big-hearted, grateful, generous faith that she so often alluded to in her two earlier nonfiction books. The people in Anne Lamott's real life are like beloved characters in a favorite series for her readers--her friend Pammy, her son, Sam, and the many funny and wise folks who attend her church are all familiar. And *Traveling Mercies* is a welcome return to those lives, as well as an introduction to new companions Lamott treats with the same candor, insight, and tenderness. Lamott's faith isn't about easy answers, which is part of what endears her to believers as well as nonbelievers. Against all odds, she came to believe in God and then, even more miraculously, in herself. As she puts it, "My coming to faith did not start with a leap but rather a series of staggers." At once tough, personal, affectionate, wise, and very funny, *Traveling Mercies* tells in exuberant detail how Anne Lamott learned to shine the light of faith on the darkest part of ordinary life, exposing surprising pockets of meaning and hope.

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Customer Reviews

For most writers, the greatest challenge of spiritual writing is to keep it grounded in concrete language. The temptation is to wander off into the clouds of ethereal epiphanies, only to lose

readers with woo-woo thinking and sacred-laced clichés. Thankfully, Anne Lamott (*Operating Instructions*, *Crooked Little Heart*) knows better. In this collection of essays, Lamott offers her trademark wit and irreverence in describing her reluctant journey into faith. Every epiphany is framed in plainspoken (and, yes, occasionally crassly spoken) real-life, honest-to-God experiences. For example, after having an abortion, Lamott felt the presence of Christ sitting in her bedroom: This experience spooked me badly, but I thought it was just an apparition born of fear and self-loathing and booze and loss of blood. But then everywhere I went I had the feeling that a little cat was following me, wanting me to reach down and pick it up, wanting me to open the door and let it in. But I knew what would happen: you let a cat in one time, give it a little milk and then it stays forever. Whether she's writing about airplane turbulence, bulimia, her "feta cheese thighs," or consulting God over how to parent her son, Lamott keeps her spirituality firmly planted in solid scenes and believable metaphors. As a result, this is a richly satisfying armchair-travel experience, highlighting the tender mercies of Lamott's life that nudged her into Christian faith. --Gail Hudson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A key moment in the step-by-step spiritual awakening of the author came to her as a freshman in college when an impassioned professor taught her Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Raised by her bohemian California family to believe only in "books and music and nature," Lamott (*Bird by Bird*; *Operating Instructions*) was enthralled by the Danish philosopher's rendition of the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham, Lamott learned, so trusted in God's love that he was willing to follow the order to sacrifice his own son. This story pierced Lamott and she "crossed over. I don't know how else to put it or how and why I actively made, if not exactly a leap of faith, a lurch of faith.... I left class believing?accepting?that there was a God." Nonetheless, it would take the heartbreak of her father's death and more than a dozen years of escalating drug and alcohol addiction to bring Lamott to fully embrace Christianity. In a short autobiography and 24 vignettes that appeared in earlier versions in the online magazine *Salon*, Lamott blends raw emotional honesty with self-mocking goofiness to show how the faith she has cultivated at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in the poor community of Marin City, Calif., translates into her everyday life and friendships, especially into her relationship with her young son, Sam. Although Lamott's clever style sometimes feels too calculated, the best bits here memorably convey the peace that can descend when a sensitive, modern woman accepts the love of God with her own brand of fear and trembling. First serial to *Mirabella*; author tour. Agent, Chuck Verrill. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I borrowed this book at my local library and, after reading it, ordered a copy for my daughter. *Traveling Mercies* is an honest account of Lamott's life (warts and struggles) and her faith in God. I, too, have faith, but find I'm often stereotyped as to my political beliefs and my mind set (narrow mindedness by default apparently) simply because I believe in God. This stereotyping gets so very old!!!! Lamott's perspective on God is genuine and refreshing. One of my daughters currently struggles with three of the same issues Ms. Lamott fought. My hope is my daughter will see herself in this book and realize God loves her even if she isn't perfect and, on the flip-side, she doesn't have to be perfect to have a relationship with God.

As someone in a spiritual quandary right now, I often found myself scouring the bookshelves for authors about faith. I was not looking for the Lee Strobel or the Max Lucado - I needed to read about people experiencing life and what it meant for their faith. My roommate insisted that Anne Lamott was the way to go. I didn't really know what to expect going into the book. I'm fairly critical about faith-related books and I wasn't interested in any "fluff"-filled that boosts our Christian ego. Well, my prayers were answered and "fluff"-filled is the last adjective I would use to describe this book. In the first section of the book, I was glued to the struggles, the ambitions, and the experiences of Anne Lamott's personal life. The only way I can describe this book is "raw" - nothing is held back from the reader. Lamar is completely honest and very real with her audience. You could tell that she wasn't trying to be dramatic - she wasn't trying to get your pity, your sympathy, your trust, your disdain. She speaks very honestly about who she is and opens herself up to her audience. She has tried to do the right thing when at times knowing what the right thing is is difficult, but she also has made mistakes. But we don't judge her for that - she admits when she does wrong and explains why she tried justifying her mistakes in the past. She is an author that feels very human. At the end of the book, I found that I had more answers and more questions from this book. But I also felt that I had experienced something very genuine and authentic. I had not only learned more about Lamott, but I also learned a lot about faith from just the daily happenings in her life. To me, that's more inspirational than any Nicholas Spark novel. If you are looking for a book on faith that doesn't have all the answers, you won't be disappointed.

I'm a crappy reader (or, to be more accurate I suppose, I have a non-specific reading disorder.) This is one of the few books (on Kindle, because it helps to make words big and columns narrow) - that is worth the effort that it takes me to complete a book. Ms. Lamott knows how to put words together

like nobody else I've ever read. They're like butter, or cake or something. I want to eat them or savor them or in some other way not let them go. Even if you don't like her stories, or don't agree with her theology - or any theology at all - read it. Just do it. You may tire of mentions of her hair - but all of the other stories will make up for it.

I knew Ms. Lamott from "Bird by Bird," so when I saw this book lying on a table at my daughter and son-in-law's home, I decided to download it and read 95% of the biographical extended sketch while flying from DC to Colorado. It's a touching, cunningly written, occasionally laugh-out-loud glimpse into her spiritual journey and her personal life. Well done, Anne; once again you've taught me how a writer at the top of her game can subtly influence the rest of us who are trying to develop our expository skills while simultaneously opening your own world to all your readers.

Mercies I have written this review three times without posting it. I guess it is special to me. This book by Anne Lamont a single parent in No. California grabbed me the first time I read it. Ann's writing reveals tender mercies, and small miracles, She is a modern day woman grappling with how to grope with raising her son, living with faith, her friends and people who pass through her life. I reread it because I was feeling down and depressed and knew Ann Lamont's brand of faith would restore me. It did, thank you. thank you thank you. I want to call her, as she calls her friends and asks how to deal with this world. She writes with humour, compassion and grace and quite well.

To another reviewer's "point" this book would be a bit shocking to those who follow a more traditional Christian doctrine. (Lucky for me - I am NOT that conservative Christian) For those who are seeking to know Christianity from an every man/woman perspective this is the best book I have ever read related to a faith journey! I can say that I have prized it in my library and I have gifted countless copies of this book to my friends and co-workers who have found themselves mired in life's more turbulent chapters! You will laugh, you will cry (sometimes simultaneously) but you will NOT be untouched by this book. It is to say the least thoughtful and evocative! Order it today.

I love Anne Lamott's "Bird by Bird," and decided to explore her other works... Wow! What a story this is, what a collection of hard-learned lessons, what a lot to ponder and apply to my own experience! Anne Lamott is not only a fine prose stylist and writer on writing, she is a profound thinker, a philosopher, a wise woman. Her Christianity is tempered with poverty and addiction, peppered with street language and cultural references (some of them, alas, give the text a dated

flavor)... she is a very real, flawed person. She is an author who's paid her dues, and practices her faith without apology, coyness, or self-righteous blather. I will read this book over and over, and I've already given it as a gift to other people struggling to make sense of child-raising, aging, and how beautiful life is in the midst of the noise.

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