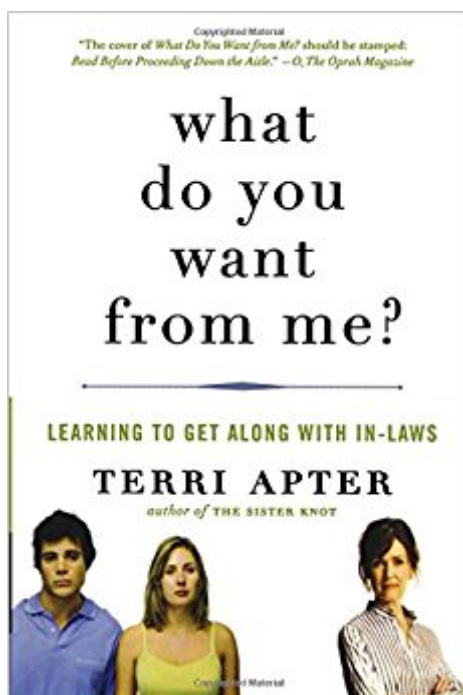


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# What Do You Want From Me?: Learning To Get Along With In-Laws



## Synopsis

The cover of *What Do You Want from Me?* should be stamped read before proceeding down the aisle. O, The Oprah Magazine When we marry, we believe the bond is between only two individuals. Few of us realize the power that in-laws exert over our lives. *What Do You Want from Me?* takes a fresh look at how the in-laws we acquire when we marry affect our quality of life—our marriage, family, personal comfort, and long-term well-being—for better or worse. Here is an essential book for husbands and wives, parents and children, seeking to strengthen the bonds of family.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Though it's often said that you don't just marry a person, you marry their family too, these complex relationships are often reduced to mother-in-law jokes and cruel stereotypes. Apter, a writer, psychologist and Cambridge University fellow, explores the mysteries and conflicts that come with the in-laws, including mother, father, sister and brother. Offering compelling insights into the power these relationships over a marriage, and the well being of both partners, Apter bases her report on interviews with 150 volunteers, in both the U.K. and the U.S. With professional grace, Apter exposes the emotional minefields that couples often navigate around in-laws, and the ease with which they become stuck in negative (and familiar) attitudes toward them. Apter moves beyond convenient labels, for example readdressing the idea of a mama's boy and what he can mean for a new wife, and convincingly demonstrating why women bear the brunt of the tension from both sides of the

family. Self-help-standard questionnaires, exercises and coping methods-mostly practical-are also included in each chapter, giving readers knowledge and skills to relate more openly with the loved one's less-than-loveable family. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• A keenly perceptive interpretation of the kinship structures, • fracture lines, • and recurrent emotions • resentment, ambivalence, acceptance • that are part and parcel of the in-law experience. • - The Atlantic • With professional grace, Apter exposes the emotional minefields that couples often navigate around in-laws, and the ease with which they become stuck in negative (and familiar) attitudes toward them. • - Publishers Weekly

This book was extremely helpful in explaining why getting along with in-laws is so tough--specifically why it's so difficult for wives and mother-in-laws to get along. Particularly interesting and insightful was her explanation that girls are better at establishing their autonomy as teens while simultaneously reassuring their parents that they still love and need them (albeit in different ways), so that by the time they are married, they've already established that they are grown women with their own separate lives. Boys on the other hand are not as good at this and subsequently many men expect their wives to do the work of creating boundaries for them! Ironically, these men don't realize they are doing this and often criticize their wives for doing exactly what they have been nudging them to do. (raises hand!) However helpful and cathartic it was to read about the underlying psychological issues and feelings that lead to these disputes, I wish Apter had added a chapter about dealing with in-laws with personality disorders and did a more concrete job in explaining at what point the couple should recognize that a relationship is no longer possible/salvageable and go "no contact" (she mentions this only briefly in passing). Apter says at one point in the book that the relationship can always be turned around. I feel that Apter's statement gave my husband a bit of false hope. That may be true if you're talking about a normal psychologically adjusted person with basic human respect for other people. But, my mother in law has Narcissistic Personality Disorder --the hallmarks of which are inability to empathize with others, using others for personal gratification, and being controlling, manipulative and otherwise destructive --furthermore they are never wrong and the problem is never with them. So Apter's advice which required two willing participants to sit down and talk about ways they can mutually respect each other's feelings....just wouldn't work in our situation. It would have been helpful for Apter to mention that if her advice isn't improving the situation, it may not be you, per se, but that perhaps there are some other things to consider (such

as a personality disorder, etc). It was only after doing my own research that we were later able to identify my MIL's problem. Overall, I think this was an excellent book. A very cathartic read for someone frustrated and struggling with in-law issues, especially someone like myself who really likes to understand WHY things work the way they do and why people ACT the way they do. It gives a great breakdown of how feelings on both sides escalate and how to better manage them--especially if you're not dealing with a personality disorder. If you are, I would still recommend this book, but for different reasons--it will help you better understand the situation, but don't expect it to give you practical advice for resolving in-law tensions with a PD.

Changed my life. I had my boyfriend read it and helped me understand a different perspective. I made better decisions so did buy boyfriend and we solved our in law issues.

Excellent insights into the workings of a difficult family system. Well researched and thought out. Excellent exercises. Well done.

It was a good read, had scenarios that were relatable and I thought it provided a good wholesome view of certain situations where it's really hard to understand where someone else is coming from.

Good Book. Real Facts. Real examples. I love that it gives you both perspectives: Mother-in law point of view and Daughter in Law point of view

I have found this book to be most helpful and insightful. I felt like Dr. Apter was talking directly to me. The Problems and situations described in the book are exactly what I am going through. My daughter-in-law and I do not get along and many of the conflicts we are experiencing are listed here in the book . I am taking notes and trying to pass on what I have learned . This is a long and hard journey but I hope with Dr. Apter's help I can get through it. I have also asked my Son and Daughter-in-law to read it as well so we can all be on the same page.

This book addresses in-law contention with a focus on mother-in-law/daughter-in-law contention. I would recommend this to someone who is not yet married or who has only minor contention with in-laws. For me, it was not very practical and it seems the majority of the advice was appeasement-focused. The other downside was that it read like a dissertation-turned-seminar-lecture (like reading a professor's PowerPoint), which was terribly

distracting and unengaging. I should have seen this coming when the author made apologies for her writing style in the preface. If you have serious/severe contention with your in-laws, try *Toxic In-Laws* by Susan Powers instead.

"What Do You Want from Me?" has honestly been one of the best books I have read in the category of family/self-help. The author does a fantastic job of finding a balance between scholarly research and personal experience from the couples portrayed. I have also been very pleased with the end-of-chapter exercises that are specified for each person in the family, from the mother-in-law to the son and daughter-in-law. Personally, I have been able to relate to most of the situations and apply the lessons presented in my own relationship with my mother in law. Overall, I highly recommend this author, and particularly this book.

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