



I Didn't Plan to be a Witch: And Other Surprises of a Joyful Mother

Linda Eyre

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Linda Eyre, who co-authored the *New York Times* bestseller *Teaching Your Children Values*, has nine children. She knows that although no mother *plans* to be a witch, there are times when every mother does a terrific job of playing the part.

In her reassuring and hilarious report on being a mother in today's hectic world, Linda honestly describes not only the vital importance and magnificent moments of motherhood, but also those days when mothers feel they are living in a Roadrunner cartoon that never ends. She shares her own experiences with managing unmanageable schedules, coping with mealtime chaos, trying to find time for herself, and the sometimes desperate measures and compromises that are necessary to get it all done (and even then, not always). Whether offering advice on streamlining your life, coping with the martyr syndrome, or ignoring the outrageous demands of toddlers and teens with serenity and grace (or not), Linda Eyre speaks with the voice of experience.

I Didn't Plan to be a Witch: And Other Surprises of a Joyful Mother Details

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Molly Christensen says

After reading several parenting books by Richard & Linda Eyre which were full of great info, this one was very refreshing because you could see that they really aren't as perfect as you'd had them pictured in your mind. Of course they still have done a fantastic job of parenting!

Inger-Johanne Bauer says

The author has a warm and friendly tone, and there is a lot of advice that makes sense, but I think that the book is a bit outdated, or maybe it's just that I don't live in that kind of environment. The author had loads of children and had chosen this deliberately and went all in for the mother role. A great part of the book is about all the chaos that happens in such a large family. Maybe this is still common in Utah where this book was published, but it seems very far from my reality. I deliberately chose not to have more kids than I thought I could responsibly handle (3, in our case), and although there were some busy years when they were little I didn't really feel I could relate very well. I guess I'm not in the target audience.

Allison says

I have been reading some heavy, slightly depressing, books lately, so this book was a breath of fresh air. It made me chuckle and didn't make me feel guilty about my many mommy failures.

Angie says

This was the best motherhood therapy I've ever had. It helped me to realize that even a mother extraordinaire has the same hair-raising, scream into a pillow moments as I've had. It felt more like a friend putting her arm around me and just knowing what it's like here in the trenches of raising a family than an actual self-help book. She's completely honest about the good, bad and ugly (and sometimes just plain crazy) parts of being a mother. It's one I'll add to my personal library. I know I'll refer to it more than once if for no other reason to be reminded that we all go through it, that we survive, and that somehow we can find great joy along the way.

Karlie says

This was an excellent parenting book. The author is an LDS woman with 9 children who has written many popular books on parenting along with her husband Richard Eyre. The title of the book caught my interest; as Linda explains so well, "common, ordinary children have an incredible knack of driving an otherwise normal, fun-loving mother to the brink of insanity...there are moments when we put on our witch hat, stick a wart on our noses and screech things like, 'Don't bother me!' 'I can't talk about that right now!' and, 'That was

a stupid thing to do!" She recommends to "keep reminding yourself how much fun you're having."

She tells some hilarious frustrating personal stories of the day to day life as a mother. She has many great tips for improving your role as a mother. She talks about children not being like clay that can be molded how we want, but rather they are seedlings - whether an orange or a lemon - and it is our job to "observe, water, expose to the sun, weed, provide fertilizer, nurture, in order to make the most beautiful plant possible from the seedlings we are given."

I really like that she specifically reaches out to mothers of young children and says "I am here to offer hope. It is getting easier...and incredibly rewarding." I really don't like when parents say, "just wait until they're teenagers!" Like all teenagers are horrible. I like her perspective and optimism much better.

The most insightful part for me was the part about looking at motherhood as a career. She emphasizes the importance of having a plan and goal setting and taking time out to think about those things regularly. She reminds us that the key to success in any job is to love it. She says to "visualize yourself as being involved in the world's most exciting career. You are shaping lives, breeding self-confidence, discovering talent, directing these little people toward making contributions, and improving yourself as you do. You are doing your part in a grass-roots way to strengthen the crumbling American family unit, which forms the true basis of our society."

Very inspiring. I have a renewed energy and purpose to my mothering role. I plan to read more of her books.

Naomi Brown says

Very fun and insightful. I related with the author because I feel like I have a million things to do and I'm the one doing all the housework and I don't even have kids yet! Has good advice. I recommend it.

The Hof's says

I have read this book many times and always find it helpful. She is a real Mother who tries to be virtuous and then keeps trying when it gets really hard (many times a day). I found myself laughing and consoled that someone else had the same day as myself.

Kami says

This was fun, short, and a good thing to read when you're having a crummy day (week, month, year) with your kids. The author is the mother of nine children and has written several other parenting books with her husband, including a NY Times #1 bestseller. Anyway, I loved that she said she liked to write in the dust on her piano "If a thing is just barely worth doing, then just barely do it." And one time when her husband told her around midnight after a hectic day that two articles were due for a newsletter the next day that she needed to write, she covered her head with a pillow and told him, "I can't do it....and you are...stupid." Hee. Hee. I also enjoyed the chapter on Christmas and how she would like to write a "real" Christmas newsletter to send out about how 4 out her 9 kids don't flush the toilet, one whines and complains constantly, one always overspends, etc. It was great for a laugh and did provide some concrete examples on how you can improve some things.

Claire says

It was a delightful read.

Jamaille Noto says

Excellent book with real stories of a mom in the trenches of motherhood!

Mariah Payne says

So helpful. A book I want to re-read in a few years!

Danni says

Every mother should read this book. So funny but oh so true.

Trace says

Oh, how I adore the Eyre family!! Linda Eyre never fails to make me chuckle! She's so humble and open with all of her "mom moments" its impossible not to love her! But here's the thing - she has so much wisdom as well... she will have you saying "aha! Brilliant!!" even while the tears of laughter are streaming down your face! :)

I so needed this pick-me-up at just the moment that I started reading it!

Tanya W says

This was a very good parenting book with many helpful ideas. I really liked that it tells the truth about what a hard job it is to be a mother... there is no formulaic way to make it easy. There are principles that will make it better for everyone, but there is no cure- all for family challenges. I took a lot of notes and feel that I can be a better mother by remembering some of the things I learned. Linda Eyre is very funny and down to earth and very easy to relate to (even though I could personally never have ten children).

At first I was surprised by some of the author's parenting admissions (going into the post office with a 4 year old and infant in the car and going through a long line; taping a binkie in a child's mouth) but then I realized this was written 21 years ago... things have changed some.

What I especially liked:

The book offers concrete improvement ideas in areas including developing patience, sibling rivalry, anger management, planning for success, etc.

The chapters are short and well-written with a healthy dose of humor.

A very good read.

Below are the notes I took so I could review and commit to some of the principles in the book. So this is what I learned and you could say a mini "summary" of the book and what I thought was most important. (This contains "spoilers").

Practice Patience (practice makes perfect):

- 1- Don't overvalue material things.
- 2- Visualize self as calm center in storm.
- 3- Reachable goals (apologize if you fail).
- 4- Remind children that things aren't fair.
- 5- Voice of mildness.
- 6- Decide on calmness in advance.

Chart children's issues, reaction, & improvement plan (things that happen).

Example:

Child: William

Issue: He grabs stuff of counter.

My Reaction: Scream Stop! No!

Plan for Better Action: Focus on keeping counters clear & creating a more spill/mess-proof environment .

Child: Ella

Issue: Not prepared to leave house.

My Reaction: tense frustration, after multiple requests, yeall get in the car right now, we're late...

Plan for Better Action: Reward readiness.

Sibling Rivalry (method geared to younger children)

Repenting Bench

- Sit until they can tell me what they did wrong (Ella tells what Ella did wrong, Michael tells what Michael did wrong). If they sit a while or can't figure it out, they will have to ask, "what did I do?"
- Dialogue: "I'm sorry I did..., will you forgive me? I won't do it again."
- Hug
- We talk about what Jesus would do.

Speed in Going Slow

"I can get this done faster if I remain calm." ~

No right or wrong... come to win-win. Both parties can understand the other's view and progress to resolution. Much burden lifted by sympathy and understanding (in the case of child who feels overworked for example).

Practice looking through child's eyes. ~

Adversity- Many problems are up to us and the Lord. Others cannot take away many of our burdens... but they help us grow and develop compassion. ~

The "Drastic Park" is causing a pearl to form, and will help us help others. ~

Children must have room to be individuals (but must operate within parameters).
Children are not like clay to be molded, but seedlings.

Our Job: observe, water,,provide light, weed, fertilize, nurture.
The Result: a beautiful plant... each one different!

Watch children to see what they love and excel at (what kind of “plant” they are). Be a good watcher.

Hormonal Anger Solution

Pause and ask, “What does my conscience say to do?”

Remember who is to blame if I lose my temper: me.

Worrying

- Will this matter in 5 years?
- Worry less about changing others and more about changing self.
- Try to dismiss unfounded worries and look to the Lord for help on genuinely important worries.

Unconditional Love

- “I don't like what you did, but there's nothing you could do that would make me stop loving you.”
- “What you did makes me very angry. I don't like your behavior. But no matter what, I still love you.”

Praise Dwell on positive.

Change We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are (Anais Nih).

Record Watch for “the moments” and write them down.

What are we busy about?

To Succeed, I Need a Plan

- Have a goal in mind.
- Think about how to make things better
- Getaway (24-48 hours)
 - 1- Mission Statement
 - 2- My long range goals.
What do I need to accomplish goals?
Physically, emotionally, socially, mentally, spiritually
 - 3- Realize life's “seasons” (spend energy on the season I'm in)
 - youth & college
 - childbearing/ child rearing
 - heavier involvement in career/activities outside home
 - getting older, traveling, grandchildren
 - 4- Medium range goals- Where to I want to be in five years?
What personality traits, relationship with kids
 - 5- How can I be the best partner possible?
 - Show admiration and appreciation (What do I admire and how can I show it?)
 - Weekly Date
 - Weekly planning session (this week's activities, how we can help each other)
 - Five facet review of children's needs (physical, emotional, social, mental, spiritual)
 - 6- Survey children's progress
 - What are each child's interests and gifts

● Journal for each: things they have done and said, observations of what they are like

Gift it for wedding or college graduation.

7- Determine not to “scorekeep” (worry about grades, progress on an instrument, popularity compared with others).

Instead focus on:

Is he/she really being educated?

How can I improve quality of his/her life?

How sensitive is he/she to others?

8- Set family goals together and focus

9- Remember mothering is hard.

Learn from mistakes and apologize.

Write plans to be more patient, understanding, and loving.

Spend some time each year on “yearly goals”, each month on “monthly goals”, each week on “weekly goals”.

This career takes dedication and determination, prayer and persistence, talent and tenacity, madness and mental energy, humor and sensitivity, and plenty of overtime.

Michelle says

I related to this book the minute I saw the title. It is comprised of different essays that cover a wide range of topics from keeping the house organized to figuring out what you really want from motherhood. Loved it!
