



It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us

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In Mrs. Clinton book, she stresses that it takes a village to help children to develop to their full potential. It takes parents, churches, schools, businesses and others. As a country, we need to look at other countries to see what they may be doing better than America and pick out the good ideas.

It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us Details

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From Reader Review It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us for online ebook

Yoo-Yoo says

This book was written in 1996, during Bill Clinton's first term, and the title stuck with me until now, when I finally looked it up at my library and sat down to read it. I am glad I checked it out. It reminded me of many truths and considerations I knew growing up, but have forgotten in the day-to-day pettiness of life. It made me feel more grounded. There are many things we teach children about what is good and stable and how to be ready to deal with society and the outside world. I had forgotten too many of these lessons over the years in my fast-paced, tech-centric life, and a refresher as well as a glimpse at the larger issues was very helpful. Mrs. Clinton has an authoritative, self-aware, and motherly narrator voice, guiding you through the book.

As implied by the extended title "It Takes a Village, and Other Lessons Children Teach Us", this book is focused on children. Children's physical, emotional and intellectual development, children's safety, children's health, children's exposure to media, the effect of poverty and violence on children. Mrs. Clinton has many example stories, pretty much every other page, about how different government policies (for example, free school lunches) have affected specific children in the U.S. and around the world in different ways, as well as stories of raising Chelsea and stories of her own childhood.

In many ways, this is somewhat of a history book as well. It captures the U.S. in 1996 very well. At that time, violence in video games, Joe Camel marketing cigarettes to children, and charter schools were new issues. The internet was a new technology, people used landlines as their main telephones, and income inequality in the U.S. wasn't nearly as bad as it is now, but was noticeably increasing. It also has snippets of Mrs. Clinton's childhood, showing the U.S. as it was in the 1950s. She covers how life, work, and child-rearing was changed by many different forces leading up to the 90s. People worried about different things then.

It's sad to realize most schools still don't have the educational programs she described almost twenty years ago.

This book did take a while to read, as it can be a bit pedantic at times. There is much talk of values. By two-thirds of the way through, you get the general gist -- we could be doing a lot more for our children as a village. We need to be more responsible. We need to support programs that may cost extra money but will produce a great return because they are investments in our children. To some extent, she lays out an image of ideal parents, something none of us could really achieve. It's also a very American bent, of course, emphasizing the self-esteem and optimism that does help one succeed in American culture.

I didn't buy all her arguments, but the majority of them made sense. I kept wanting to put the book down and go do something to help children already! I ended up volunteering to read books to disadvantaged preschoolers. So the book will have a longer lasting impact...

Debolina Raja says

An amazing book about how the whole universe conspires to create the right ambience for a child to grow up in. Hilary Rodham Clinton uses examples from real everyday life to tell us how each one of us is responsible towards the proper growth and development of our little ones into good and mature human beings. Life is an experience, and it takes the whole village and community to make this life fulfilling and learning for our

little ones.

A must-read.

Scott says

First of all, this is a misunderstood book.

Many people falsely assume that it's about how government or society is more important than family when it comes to the upbringing of children. Instead, the central thesis is that society has a crucial role *in addition to that of a family* when it comes to creating a safe and nurturing environment for children. And the corollary: that governments and policies should be judged by the impact that they have on our children.

Clinton includes a number of statistics to support her claims, as well as anecdotal information about programs and policies around the world as well as in communities in the US. Unfortunately, all of this information is now two decades out of date, and therefore of questionable value in today's political debates.

Regardless of how you feel about Hillary Clinton, personally or politically, this is a fascinating and provocative book. And if you're not sure how to feel about Hillary, it does contain some insight as to her character and values (conservatives might be surprised on the emphasis she places on faith, family, and work ethic), and on her progressive positions on issues including health care, education, and gun control.

Cherie Nef says

Annoying and preachy. It may take a village to raise a child, but that village shouldn't be the government.

Nicole says

I couldn't even finish it--and that was before the whole Daddy Clinton with a Cigar in the White House fiasco. Yes, children are priceless, brilliant, beautiful treasures, but it really only takes two involved, self-respecting, loving parents to raise a child. The problem our children have in our country is that many parents are too damn lazy and expect other people--teachers, school counselors, day care centers, nannies, etc.--to raise their kids, and to teach them discipline and morals. Surprise! That doesn't work. Kids need their parents, not a village or Big Government.

Robyn says

Considering I spent years in the Conservative community, where people who never read this book joked about & condemned it without having read it, I had never bothered to read it in the 90s. It's been on my "to read" pile a couple of years now, and I decided if there was ever a time to read it, that time has come.

Regardless how one feels about Hillary's ambition or political tactics, this book is worthy of being judged on its own merit. It has plenty of wisdom to offer for every time and place in human society.

At it's simplest, this is a peasantly nostalgic read, exploring the general sense of safety most Caucasian, middle class families felt in the 50s and 60s. Penny candy, walking to the park to until the street lights came on, the values instilled in church, the strong sense of community, and so much more. Though for African American families, the challenges were harder, I have long heard those who grew up or raised a family during that time reminisce about the pleasures of walking to the corner store, playing outside without fear of impending danger, and how family, friends and neighbors all kept a watchful eye on everyone's kids, intervening as needed, affirming & mentoring, and telling your Mama if your escapades were of a dangerous or ill intentioned nature.

Hillary addresses, within the context of her pleasant or fearful memories, how different our society is today: how long work hours increase family instability and undermine marriages, the importance of monogamy in creating a safe environment in which to nurture a child, and how when families fall apart, the undergirding of our entire society is torn asunder.

She speaks of our sense of alienation, fear of strangers, and inability to feel safe anywhere, limits our involvement in community, community service, and ability to raise raise children to be free, run and play, or even go to the corner store without a sense of forboding.

She reminds of things we took for granted, such as good schools, public pools & playgrounds, safe streets, neighborhood policemen who knew your family and was mentor, a protector and a friend. Libraries were free, most school supplies were provided, we had recess twice a day, participated in public performances, created art & explored many types of physical activities to increase our health and fitness.

She explores how extremist political policies have robbed us of most of these ingredients of creating cultured people, fostering compassion, patriotism and developing skills to express ourselves as needed to be active participants in our careers & the national dialog.

By condemning the safeguards & opportunities that made these things possible, by calling it "government interference" and "communism", we have allowed private business to take over these privileges and have ceded our American inheritance to corporations who monopolize our resources and hold them for ransom at unaffordable prices.

Though "Mayberry" was never a complete reality, its spirit did exist in communities who fostered its sustaining values for many generations. In the name of "free market," we've sold our birthright as Americans to preserve community rooted in our shared strengths, wisdom & contributions. We now sacrifice our mutually owned public amenities to private control, for profit. Public libraries, school systems and public utilites are becoming increasingly owned or controlled by private interests. Guardians and transmitters of classic literature, art, history nd the 3 RS have become purveyors of pop culture, mythological versions of history, and expensive tutoring with the sole intention of gaining profit, whether or not they successfully perform or deliver the promised goods and services.

The Hillary who wrote this book in no way resembles the person the conservative right presents as a murderer and a dictator who will ruin our lives. This Hillary is a person of commitment, humility and a desire to serve.

I'm taking my time with this book, so I have no idea when I will finish it. I'm sipping it like a fresh cup of coffee. It's a pleasure to read.

Jen says

Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote this book with her heart in the right place. I believe that she does have a lot of compassion for children. That being said, there were times that I had great difficulty reading her book about the well being of children, knowing that she was a war hawk in the US's illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003. On page 290 of her book, Clinton states that it is the responsibility of the government to "Keep America the world's strongest force of peace, freedom, and prosperity." Her vote for war did nothing to embrace these ideals. War does not effect any person more than it effects a child. Of the vast problems that children in the United States face, their problems pale in comparison to the challenges that many Iraqi children are dealing with.

On a more positive note - what I did like about this book is that for every problem Clinton mentions, she offers a solution - either an idea of how it can be improved, or by giving a real world example of what other communities are doing to tackle or eliminate problems. These ideas come from small rural communities and big cities. She also uses examples of what other countries are doing to help their own children. Many of these programs, Clinton witnessed for herself, seeing firsthand, the important work that certain agencies are conducting. Clinton's book also provides an overview of the types of policy changes that needs to occur in this country in order to build a better quality of life for children. It Takes A Village to Raise a Child, was well written, well researched and I gained a lot of insight on some very important social programs. Regardless of some of my personal feelings about Hillary Rodham Clinton, I did enjoy her book.

Keren Threlfall says

It is politically convenient to ignore perspectives from politicians (or people in general) with whom we assume to disagree with. In politics, I think there is an even greater belief that if we disagree (particularly, strongly) with someone, they must be deficient in all other areas, as well. But it is not always socially expedient to practice such an existence, and when considering how we can best work together to foster human flourishing as much as is possible, we would be remiss to ignore the core, important message of Hillary Clinton's "It Takes a Village."

The premise of Clinton's books is that it requires a community effort to raise a well-rounded child fit to eventually become part of and give back to the community at large. As Clinton indicates, no family truly lives in a vacuum. Implementation of Clinton's perspectives may vary across political parties, but implementation is not the primary point of this book.

At times Clinton waxes political, but overall the book read like a rather conservative view of the importance of family life in the United States. (And at times, it is dreadfully boring and repetitive.)

Growing up, I often heard "I don't want a village raising my kids," or "it does not take a village to raise a child." Ironically, those voices decrying this were coming from...my village. I think I heard this primarily because they opposed Clinton. Without understanding what she was suggesting by this statement, the easiest option was simply to criticize this view of community and family as a whole.

Another Goodreads review puts it this way: "The problem our children have in our country is that many parents are too damn lazy and expect other people--teachers, school counselors, day care centers, nannies, etc.--to raise their kids, and to teach them discipline and morals. Surprise! That doesn't work. Kids need their

parents, not a village or Big Government!" This is the sentiment toward "it takes a village" that I observed in my community. And yet, it was within the context of a village: my private Christian school and the church community, where I heard this voiced most often.

So, entering parenthood myself, I still maintained this sentiment; perhaps even in more isolation than the community in which I was immersed as a child. When my physical, local village essentially disappeared from our lives overnight (we were asked to leave our church after raising questions), I did not immediately see how much I needed external community support as I raised my own children.

Now, as I have studied family life across cultures, I see role of "it takes a village," to be at the core in cultures and families who repeatedly produce healthy family life, generation after generation.

Continuing down the theme of sociology, I see each country to have it's own sense of "national personality," which gets reflected into so much of how we live and function together as a society, even when external markings (development, technology, etc...) may remain the same.

I tend to see America's personality as the one of a rugged individualist, a personality once necessary as an immigrant nation, pioneering into difficult new territory, rebelling against a sovereign nation (England), and to surviving much of her harsh beginnings. But as we enter into our adolescence as a nation, perhaps we can consider a more well-rounded, mature perspective. (And, this is the personality reflected in the Goodreads review I excerpted above.)

Clearly at this point in the review, this is a digression from Hillary's book at large, and a discussion on the importance of understanding a need for a healthy family life that transcends the focus on solely a nuclear family.

Last year, a friend sent me an On Being podcast that intersected on thoughts regarding the nuclear family: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/transc...>. One aspect that was discussed was the way that the nuclear family has become so lonely; whereas in times past and in other cultures, the family "would have been embedded in networks of other marriages and other families and elders and cross-generational." Today, we don't see that (for many reasons, and some are a true advantage), and it is very unnatural, considering the way it seems family life was designed to exist. (The podcast dialogue goes on to discuss that while some lament the single parent, they similarly lament the nuclear family existing as an island. They highlight the weight that is placed on parents who must raise children on their own, which results in eventual, successive breakdown of many families and marriages.)

Even having recently finished the book, "More than Happy," an examination of family life within the Amish culture, I was once again reminded of the importance of "the village" in a child's growth and development. (Keep in mind that I say this as a homeschooler; I also believe that even when parents take on a child's education and development in ways that are atypical to the surrounding society, village and outside involvement are still crucial. When "a village" is done in a healthy way, there is much reinforcement of the lessons parents are trying to teach at home, the sense of safety and security in the world beyond the home, and a relief of pressure on the parents having to "do it all." (Which, by sending me to church and private school, my parents and many others in our community implemented, regardless of how it was labeled at that time. It is a village I am thankful for and that has an impact on my life even today; I just wish it would have been recognized as such in my life and amongst the individuals who comprised it.)

I would recommend this book to people who may have been averse to Clinton's views on this matter in the past, as it may help give a more thorough understanding of what she was actually promoting. (This does not portray any of my current political stances on either of the Clintons. :)) I would also recommend this as a resource to anyone interested in learning about various cultural expressions of family life.

Sabiel says

Although I admire Hill's dedication to children's issues, I found this book rather lacking. The prose is exceedingly dull, perhaps because she hired a ghostwriter as she did not have time to write the book herself. (This I can understand, as she was a trailblazing First Lady of the United States, traipsing the globe in advocacy of women and children.) The subsequent lack of passion (which is more visible in her oratory) is therefore painfully conspicuous.

Amy says

I love the way Hillary writes. She is great at writing on a level that it feels she is really talking directly to the reader. I felt that this book gave a great sense of how we should be in our own country towards our children. It takes more than a mom and a dad to raise a well rounded child. It takes many others and it seems there are some areas of our country that lack these values.

Kathryn says

Have to say, I am an unabashed Hillary fan. But that said, I was a bit disappointed that this 10th anniversary edition of her groundbreaking book was not updated for 2007 audiences. The data and statistics are all woefully out of date (early nineties), and therefore do not provide any sort of meaningful trend analysis. Also, in a post September 11th world, I would have liked to hear Sen. Clinton's perspectives on raising children in a climate of terrorism, xenophobia and war. Overall, I would have thought that she could have hired an intern or assistant to do the extra research to bring this book into the millenium, and was surprised that she did not. However, Clinton's book is remarkable as it provides an overview of the types of policy analysis that needs to occur in order to build a better quality of life for the next generation. It also serves as a reminder that America, under Clinton/Gore, was on the verge of accomplishing so much more... Its absolutely pathetic that the issues she raises remain unaddressed by the current administration. Okay. 'nuff of my diatribe.

Cippi says

Inspiring, worth-reading. I vote Hillary for next US President

Michelle Lemaster says

Wow! This book mad eme feel so separate from Hillary. I originally loved the idea of a woman in office based on Hillary's strong persona. Unfortunately, after reading this book, I really felt the difference in our class backgrounds. I felt that being women wasn't enough of a bond. To be honest, I was quite bored by her book. It was repetitive, and felt only like politics as usual. This book made me feel very disconnected from Hillary Clinton. Barack Obama's book, The Dreams of My Father had the opposite effect. Obama's book-

much better read!

Donna says

Loved this book. It reminds me of a time when people cared about other people and really put themselves in the place of the other before making decisions. We were a less selfish nation then. I really believe the "village principle".

Song Medina-Babijes says

I came across Hillary Clinton's book 2 years ago at a book sale and was intrigued by the title of the book. Thinking it was a sort of autobiography, I learned that the title was derived from an old African saying, "it takes a village to raise a child". The old adage simply means that a child is not only raised by his parents alone but is also "raised" by other important actors in the community such as friends, school, and village elders—figures that contribute to the total well-being of a child. Sharing her personal experiences as a mother and as a public figure, Hillary explains how modern society has become far removed from the childhood she once enjoyed, why our society has become bereft of morality and good values and why she pushing families to go back to the basics of traditional family values and community involvement.
