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Hands Free Mama: A Guide To Putting Down The Phone, Burning The To-Do List, And Letting Go Of Perfection To Grasp What Really Matters!



Synopsis

â œRachel Macy Stafford's post "The Day I Stopped Saying 'Hurry Up'" was a true phenomenon on The Huffington Post, igniting countless conversations online and off about freeing ourselves from the vicious cycle of keeping up with our "overstuffed" agendas. "Hands Free Mama" has the power to keep that conversation going and remind us that we must not let our lives pass us by. • --Arianna Huffington, Chair, President, and Editor-in-Chief of the Huffington Post Media Group, nationally syndicated columnist, and author of thirteen books <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/> DISCOVER THE POWER, JOY, AND LOVE of Living "Hands Free" • If technology is the new addiction, then multi-tasking is the new marching order. We check our email while cooking dinner, send a text while bathing the kids, and spend more time looking into electronic screens than into the eyes of our loved ones. With our never-ending to-do lists and jam-packed schedules, it's no wonder we're distracted. But this isn't the way it has to be. In July 2010, special education teacher and mother Rachel Macy Stafford decided enough was enough. Tired of losing track of what matters most in life, Rachel began practicing simple strategies that enabled her to momentarily let go of largely meaningless distractions and engage in meaningful soul-to-soul connections. She started a blog to chronicle her endeavors and soon saw how both external and internal distractions had been sabotaging her happiness and preventing her from bonding with the people she loves most. Hands Free Mama is the digital society's answer to finding balance in a media-saturated, perfection-obsessed world. It doesn't mean giving up all technology forever. It doesn't mean forgoing our jobs and responsibilities. What it does mean is seizing the little moments that life offers us to engage in real and meaningful interaction. It means looking our loved ones in the eye and giving them the gift of our undivided attention, leaving the laundry till later to dance with our kids in the rain, and living a present, authentic, and intentional life despite a world full of distractions. So join Rachel and go hands-free. Discover what happens when you choose to open your heart and your hands to the possibilities of each God-given moment.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Zondervan (January 7, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0310338131

ISBN-13: 978-0310338130

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

I really like this blogger and was sure I'd like her book so I pre-ordered it. I still thank her immensely for her contributions, but I didn't like this book as much as I thought I would. Page after page reminded me to be present to my children, without any concrete suggestions on making time for other things that also make my life meaningful (other friends, outside hobbies, a fulfilling career). Also, a lot of the message seemed aimed at parents of school age children (example-do your phone/computer work when your kids are in school and turn these things off when your kids are home). Perhaps I was in a cantankerous mood when I read it, after a 14 hour shift of solo childcare for a four and one year old, but the message of "treasure every moment" didn't sit well with me. While it is a helpful reminder that these years go quickly, I was hoping for a little more balanced message about being a devoted mom AND a person with important outside interests/work, as I know the author is. Wish she's shared a little more of that. Just how did you write a book, get 7-8 hours of sleep a night, and not ignore your kids in the meantime!?!

I really really really wanted to like this book, but I just don't. It's not so much a guide as it is a compilation of personal anecdotes about moments the author enjoyed with her children "hands free." And as a mother, I find the credibility of these moments to be questionable. Or maybe it's just the other moments that are missing - the real ones - the ones that all parents experience that aren't sparkly and quiet and loving and fun. The book is seriously lacking in reality. If I took the book at face value, and adopted all her suggestions, then I would never have time for sleep or for myself. I would be spending all my time (all 3ish hours I get with my kids after work) gazing into their eyes, and snuggling with them on the couch, and kissing their sweet smelling heads (which would require me to give them a bath), and letting them help me make the salad for dinner, and talking about each and every paper in all 3 of their school folders all the while postponing "unnecessary" tasks. Then I would read them extra books at bed time, and give them an extra snuggle, and then come down stairs to gaze lovingly into my husbands eyes while we have a meaningful conversation or sit

together to do something that doesn't involve watching television and THEN I suppose I would tackle all those "unnecessary" tasks like dinner dishes, lunch packing, and laundry. But, according to Stafford, I am also supposed to get 7-8 hours of sleep a night. And none of this even accounts for my kids' mood at the time. Her children are seemingly perfect, because there is no mention of how to gaze into the eyes of a first grader who is having a melt down because she is tired. I picked up the book because I do believe that our lives are way too scheduled and our society as a whole is ruled by the almighty iPhone. But this book is not the answer I was looking for. Try Carry On Warrior by Glennon Melton instead - not quite the same concept but a fantastic book if you are a mother of real actual children.

I wanted to like this book, but I struggled to relate to the author's "perfection." It seems that once she started living hands-free, her life became easy, her children were always wonderful, and the family spent their time having meaningful conversations and looking into each other's eyes. I wanted more practicality. When does she do laundry? When does she go to the grocery and make dinner and clean her house? How is she fully engaged with her family at every possible moment of the day while writing a book, maintaining a blog, exercising and getting eight hours of sleep each night? Her life seemed unattainable, and her suggestions felt very detached from my day to day reality.

My first exposure to this author was a piece in the Huffington Post called : The Important Thing About Yelling and I really liked it, so when I saw Stafford's book on NetGalley, I went for it. This book wasn't great, but it wasn't awful either. It just kind of ... was. I know that 'meh' isn't an incredibly helpful review, nevertheless, that's what I feel about this book. I don't know if I've been overindulging in these types of parenting/lifestyle change books, I don't know if it's because I'm reading The Happiness Project right now, where I feel much more connected to the narrator, I don't know if the market is just saturated right now with 'let go of the little things and live for what's important!!!!'-type advice books... I suspect it's a combination of all these things. The narrator didn't speak to me. Which is odd because I suspect we're from the same little corner of Alabama, ... except I'm not really from Alabama... I wasn't prepared for this book to be religious. But page after page I was smacked in the face with the phrase 'God given gifts' and praise and thanks to god that made this book come across as more religious than secular. That's fine, but it wasn't what I was expecting or looking for. The tone of the book was better suited for a blog rather than a whole book, the author uses no empirical evidence for her theories, nor does she seem to have done any research into studies on better child-rearing, etc. All accounts are strictly personal and anecdotal.

There are a few key phrases that crop up in the writing way too often, it made the writing seem a little lazy, like the author couldn't be bothered to think of a different phrase. Again, this book isn't bad, it just wasn't for me. I think that there are too many other good books on this topic out there.

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