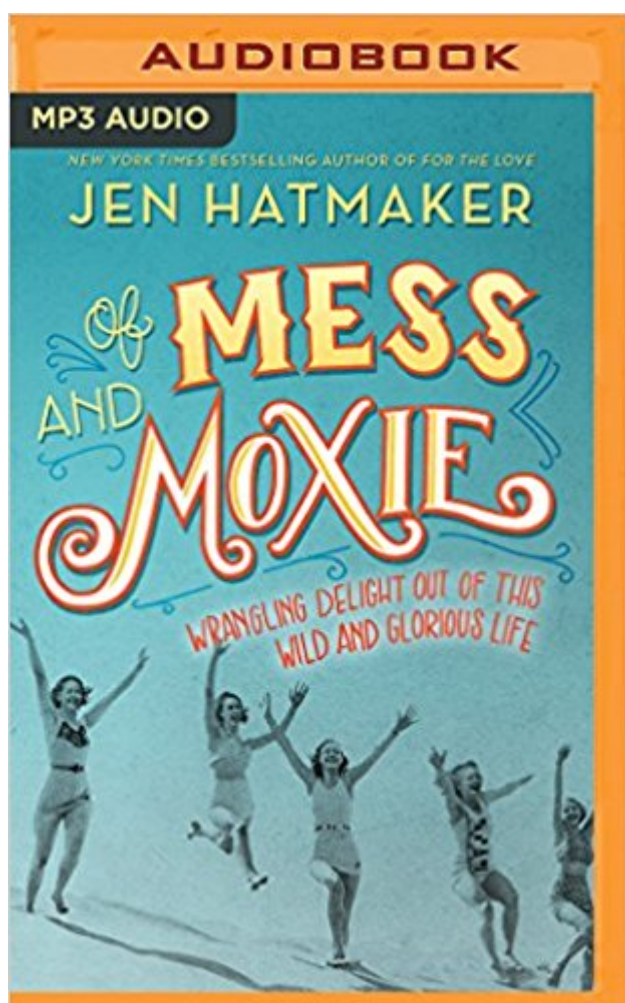


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# Of Mess And Moxie: Wrangling Delight Out Of This Wild And Glorious Life



## Synopsis

New York Times bestselling author Jen Hatmaker, with playful hilarity, shameless honesty, and refreshing insight, assures readers they have all the pluck they need for vibrant, courageous, grace-filled lives. Jen Hatmaker believes backbone is the birthright of every woman. Women have been demonstrating resiliency and resolve since forever. They have incredibly strong shoulders to bear loss, hope, grief, and vision. She laughs at the days to come is how the ancient wisdom writings put it. But somehow women have gotten the message that pain and failure mean they must be doing things wrong, that they messed up the rules or tricks for a seamless life. As it turns out, every last woman faces confusion and loss, missteps and catastrophic malfunctions, no matter how much she is doing "right." Struggle doesn't mean they're weak; it means they're alive. Jen Hatmaker, beloved author, Big Sister Emeritus, and Chief BFF, offers another round of hilarious tales, frank honesty, and hope for the woman who has forgotten her moxie. Whether discussing the grapple with change ("Everyone, be into this thing I'm into! Except when I'm not. Then everyone be cool.") or the time she drove to the wrong city for a fourth-grade field trip ("Why are we in San Antonio?"), Jen parlays her own triumphs and tragedies into a sigh of relief for all normal, fierce women everywhere who, like her, sometimes hide in the car eating crackers but also want to get back up and get back out, to live undaunted "in the moment" no matter what the moments hold.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jen Hatmaker is the author of the New York Times bestseller *For the Love* and happy hostess of a tightly knit online community where she reaches millions of people each week. She and her husband, Brandon, founded the Legacy Collective, a giving community that granted more than a million dollars in its first year. They also starred in the popular series *My Big Family Renovation* on HGTV. Jen is a mom to five, a sought-after speaker, and a delighted resident of Austin, Texas, where she and her family are helping keep Austin weird. For more information, visit [jenhatmaker.com](http://jenhatmaker.com). --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

To be honest, I'm not really sure how to review this book. When I first saw it on a "coming soon" list, I greeted it with an equal mix of interest and disdain. I wasn't interested in liking the author. I wasn't interested in liking the book. However, the description kept pulling me in. I'd like to be clear on my comments about the author. I have read none of Mrs Hatmaker's other books, and, in fact, until this book had never even heard of her. But upon doing some research her life seemed to be the polar opposite of my own. Neat where mine was messy. Stable where mine was not. What could this woman possibly offer me in the way of sympathy, understanding, or advice? However, with that being said, I just couldn't let go of the book's description. I didn't want to like the author, or the book, but I really, REALLY wanted to read it. And now with the book finished, I'm just so intensely glad I did. I'm so glad I took a chance. No, her life is absolutely nothing like mine, but every chapter ... every last one ... was filled with humor, honesty, and realism. Every chapter pulled me out of my world, and away from my pain, and they all made me think that everything is going to be ok. Life is messy for everyone, but it won't be that way forever. Reality hurts, but it can be faced and overcome. Nobody is perfect, and that's not only normal, but just fine. As I read I felt less lonely. More loved. More understood. Based off a review I read on one of Mrs Hatmaker's previous books, I was skeptical that she'd be able to connect with me at all, but she did. The book is filled with uplifting humor, candid honesty, and messages about God and love. I'd recommend it to any woman, literally ANY one, in need of support, laughter, and sisterhood. And, though I have never included lines from books before in reviews, I just can't help it here. Mrs Hatmaker's "How To" chapters were my absolute favorites, and this is an excerpt from her instructions on "How to Get Uninvited Back to a Home Decor Store"<sup>3</sup>) Hear gasp from a bystander, and look up to see your son's bare behind and a hearty stream of urine trailing from the cart into a \$48 decorative basket. You don't understand why he had to drop his underpants to his ankles, but in addition to soiling the home goods, he has now displayed his bits and bobbles for all to witness.<sup>4</sup>) Panic as you realize step 1.<sup>5</sup>) Watch the tee-tee run down the shelving unit and soak the towels below before pooling in

a delightful puddle at the end of isle 7.6) Calculate your expenditures to around ninety-five dollars of urine-soaked home items that now belong to you.7) Congratulations. You can now show back up to this store in five years. Take a chance on this book. It warmed my heart, and lifted my soul, and I think it will do as much for many.

Jen speaks to us like no one else. Her life feels like my life which is what makes her writing so dear. Best one yet.

I have some very mixed feelings about this book. From the start, I wanted to love it and the very beginning of the book set me up to do just that. Jen was very intentional about emphasizing that this book was for every woman. She specifically listed women in most all scenarios of life and it made me feel included from the start. That feeling is very important to a woman who doesn't always feel like she fits. Unfortunately, the content of the book did not match her statement. This book was supposedly written for every woman, but about 90% of it was geared toward mothers. Much of the content made me feel like it was assumed that the reader would be a mom. This was disappointing and only served to make me feel less included. I realize that Jen is a mom and I'm sure that much of her life story revolves around her kids, but don't set up a book to be for "every woman" if it's not. Just saying it is, doesn't make it so. I also was unclear as to the whole point of the book. There was some humor and a few relatable things scattered throughout it, but mostly it seemed like a random, eclectic set of thoughts on parenting. It really saddens me because even toward the end of the book, Jen talks about being aware of who is around you and realizing that not everyone is in the same place in life. She talks about women whose stories are outside the lines and she acknowledges that sensitivity to that is needed, but yet her book doesn't live up to her words. While on this subject, she makes the statement "It means considering the stories around the table before launching into an assumed shared narrative." I absolutely love the idea of this, but if her readers are those seated around the table, she surely is not considering their stories before launching into an assumed shared narrative. I wanted to appreciate her acknowledgement and consideration so much, but how could I when the whole book is about being a mom? Those of us women who live lives that are outside the lines, don't need anymore reminders that we don't fit in. The infertile certainly don't need to hear sections on "How to plan a family" in which she jokes about her husband

glancing at her, and becoming pregnant. It's not that I expect her to not want to write about her experience in parenting, but acknowledge that your target audience is moms. Not. Every. Woman. One last major issue I have with this book is the theology of it. Jen makes comments that seems rather flippant and disrespectful toward Jesus. She also embraces sinful lifestyles in the name of inclusion and love. While we are certainly called to love, we are not called to ignore sin or embrace it. One last thing I loved was near the end. She encourages her readers to fangirl their friends. Cheer and support them and be their biggest fans. I love that thought and wholly believe that we should be supporting each other and cheering each other on. It makes me sad that this book had such an opportunity to really speak to every woman, but it sadly just fell so short. The idea of making sure all women felt included and being considerate of who is around you, is an awesome, awesome thing and I absolutely believe it should be more recognized that not all women "fit the mold." Unfortunately, I finished the book feeling more glaringly left out than before. \*I received a copy of this book free of charge from BookLook Bloggers in exchange for my honest review.

Jen Hatmaker hits her stride with *Of Mess and Moxie*. Having read all her books, it's these "stories" which have helped me write my own story, own what I believe, and learn how to say it. Where this book hit home was the content surrounding relationships with friends and family. While it initially made me sad and regret the state of those relationships, Jen provides detailed, hit-the-ground-running advice on improving them. In between, the writing is funny, warm and memorable. Take the time to read and digest all the stories, laughs, tears, and reality. Yes, it's not all roses. Jen speaks of hard times, but always in the context of her tribe. More importantly, she helps us all understand we can and (maybe already) do have that support. And, gosh, I wish she would publish a cookbook because the recipes included are always fantastic, both in theory and in reality. Jen Hatmaker provides women a connection, and hopefully this book will reach the hands of other women who need more connections in their lives. \*I did receive an advanced reader's copy of this book.

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