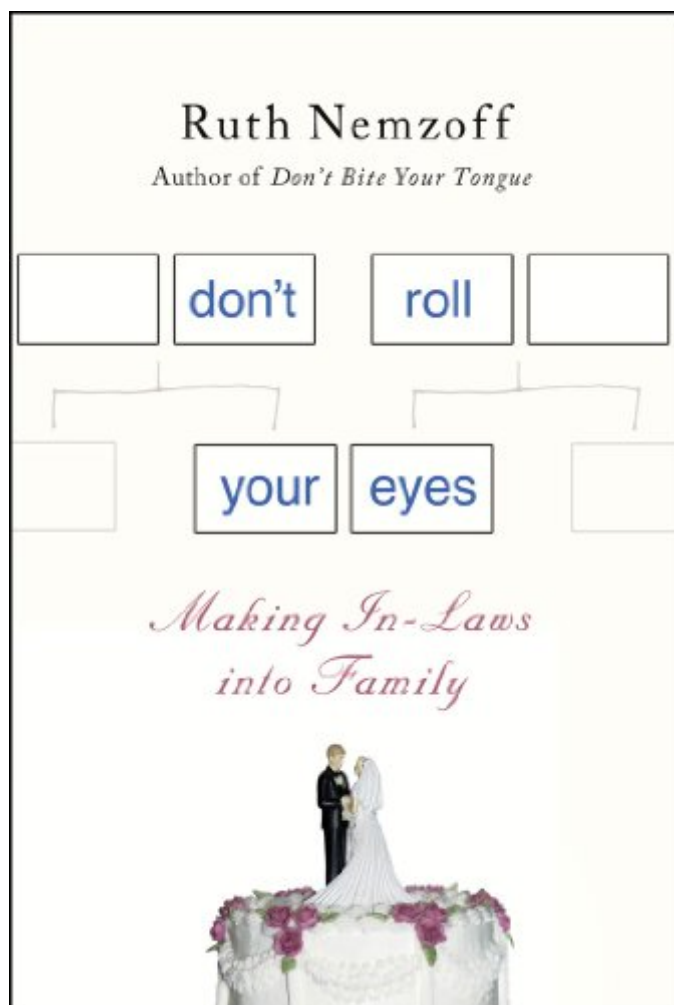


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Don't Roll Your Eyes: Making In-Laws Into Family



Synopsis

More than two million couples wed every year in the United States, bringing together a whole new family unit. The extended family may now include a hard to please mother-in-law who criticizes her daughter-in-law's childrearing; or a patriarchal father-in-law who expects all the kin round the dinner table every Sunday; or a new spouse, who a year or decade out, still gets shellshock visiting the in-laws. If that wasn't cause enough for a stiff drink, more than a million couples divorce each year, creating hard to define family structures. How do families handle the inevitable friction and how do they make sense of evolving family relationships? Ruth Nemzoff, an expert in family dynamics, empowers family members across the generations to define and create lasting bonds, including how to: *Welcome a new in-law from a different culture and religion into your family.* *Not let differences of politics or philosophy impact quality time with the extended family.* *Respond to major life changes in an in-law's life, including financial crises, illnesses, or career changes.* *Retain warm connections with in-laws even amidst divorce and remarriage.* This is a must read for anyone dealing with a difficult in-law as well as anyone who will soon be welcoming a new member to their family.

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Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed this book as a daughter-in-law trying (and currently failing) to forge a workable relationship with my in-laws. I agree with the previous reviewer who said that it's not for people who aren't ready to change their own behavior. The author includes many examples that basically get to the main message as I understood it - in each situation, whatever it may be, you have a choice how you will act (or react), and your choices can and will make the relationship better or worse. It's a good reference book for any in-law just in terms of bringing up issues that commonly arise and giving options of how to deal with them. I felt like she brought together the best of mature, balanced advice that one might receive from a wise matriarch or patriarch and made it available to everyone. I appreciated some of her more outrageous examples because she acknowledges that while it may be within a person's rights to react negatively to negative behavior, it's usually not in the best interest of anybody in the long run. I also appreciated her repeatedly asserting that while they do seem to take a lot of work, in-law relationships can be rewarding for all parties through the years.

This was an easy read. The theme to me throughout is you need to turn the other cheek. Covers a lot of different situations. You can complain to friends or a spouse but really need to control your emotions toward the in-laws to keep peace. Very complex time going through the empty nest and trying not to be competitive, not a lot of concrete answers on how to deal but that differs with personalities. I think life plays a cruel trick in that a lot of us won't be around to see our own kids go through these life adjustments. I think it's very hard for the 2 generations to communicate. The author mentions that in the book.

While addressing universal concerns, Dr. Nemzoff also asks us to see on a very personal level how family relationships can be repaired, resulting in feeling better ourselves and at the same time offering our children positive role models for dealing with family conflict. We give ourselves and our children the gift of learning how to work through difficult family matters. In addition, Dr. Nemzoff gives very specific and helpful hints as to how to go about navigating this sensitive territory.

I'm a mother-in-law seeking to improve my relationship with a daughter-in-law. This book was an easy read. It's good as a help for any in-law relationship. I'll have to see how it works when I try to put the suggestions into practice.

Still in the process of reading this book. I purchased it because I don't want to be "that in-law" that everyone hates to be with! LOLUpdates once I finish reading it.

I'm a daughter-in-law seeking an improved relationship with my mother-in-law. I've read many books, scoured countless blogs, and talked with a therapist about improving this relationship. Of all my "research," reading this book (twice) has been the most fruitful activity. This excellent (and quick) read acknowledges the complexities of in-law relationships while still providing clear, concise recommendations for both generations. But here's the kicker: you must be prepared to do your part in making things better. Don't read this YET if you're still at the point where you just want to complain about your in-laws. The author challenges you to be a bigger person, so read this if you're ready to do some work and be happier! The author is a wise, wise woman. This book could very well improve many lives!

Ruth Nemzoff is a wise woman whose writing truly resonates with me. She offers advice on what to do when perfect strangers--or people you wish were strangers--become your family, namely in-laws. Nemzoff is an expert at navigating family dynamics and grasps all the different perspectives of intergenerational relationships. She examines the forces that make in-law relationships troublesome as well as how multiple generations can benefit from them. She writes from experience and says that of all her careers--teacher, administrator, state legislator, and professor--mothering has been the most rewarding. She has four adult children, four in-law children, and seven grandchildren, with whom she has very satisfying relationships. It's easy to understand why, given her insight and communication skills. Here's an example of how she nails a basic problem: The generations often blame each other when expectations they don't even know they have are not met. We find ourselves angry, for example, when no gift arrives and we realize we expected one. We feel our emotions before we realize what we actually want. We often hang onto nostalgic expectations of family roles when roles are changing. The ease or difficulty of these relationships depends a lot on the willingness of all parties to make things work, says Nemzoff. Both generations want to be appreciated and acknowledged for their efforts and not taken for granted or judged. *Don't Roll Your Eyes* focuses on specific issues that can cause tension among the generations. Nemzoff explains that because of popular in-law jokes we can be wary of one another before we even meet. Or we can have different ideas about how much closeness we want. Another problem can be competition between sets of parental in-laws who may vie for priority. Intermarriage and blending cultures can

also contribute to disappointments that come when grandchildren are brought up with a different belief system from their parents. In the final three chapters, Nemzoff addresses the big issues of money and death and encourages families to discuss these difficult topics before it's too late. She ends the book with ten wise suggestions for improving relationships in her chapter "Do Unto Your In-laws." She makes an important statement about how to begin: We need to see ourselves truthfully and then change our behaviors and attitudes to achieve better results. We all can benefit from self-awareness so that we do not accuse others of causing our displeasure, when the dissatisfaction lies within ourselves. Wise words that take practice, practice, practice.

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