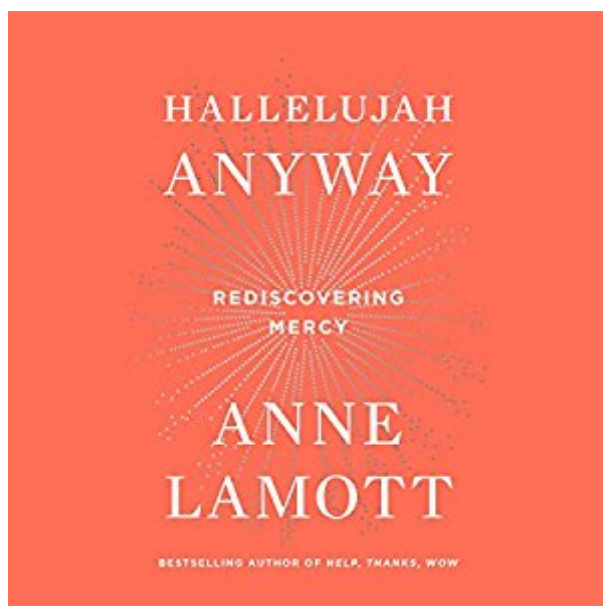


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Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy



Synopsis

From the best-selling author of *Help, Thanks, Wow* and *Stitches* comes a powerful exploration of mercy, its limitless (if sometimes hidden) presence, why we ignore it, and how we can embrace it. "Mercy is radical kindness," Anne Lamott writes in her enthralling and heartening book *Hallelujah Anyway*. It's the permission you give others - and yourself - to forgive a debt, to absolve the unabsolvable, to let go of the judgment and pain that make life so difficult. In *Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy*, Lamott ventures to explore where to find meaning in life. We should begin, she suggests, by "facing a great big mess, especially the great big mess of ourselves." It's up to each of us to recognize the presence and importance of mercy everywhere - "within us and outside us, all around us" - and to use it to forge a deeper understanding of ourselves and more honest connections with each other. While that can be difficult to do, Lamott argues that it's crucial, as "kindness towards others, beginning with myself, buys us a shot at a warm and generous heart, the greatest prize of all." Full of Lamott's trademark honesty, humor, and forthrightness, *Hallelujah Anyway* is profound and caring, funny and wise - a hopeful book of hands-on spirituality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If I wanted to sound hipper than I actually am, I'd tell you that Anne Lamott is my "spirit animal." But at my age, I'm probably not cool enough to use terms like that. So instead, I'll just say that Anne Lamott makes my world a better place, because her books are like elixirs for my soul. I've been

hooked on her writings since my wife introduced me to them several years ago during a difficult period in our lives. When I read Annie's books, I feel like I'm being hugged by her words, and "Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy" is no exception. In fact, the words on the pages of this book are the best kind of hugs, full of love and hope and spirituality. And even though I don't consider myself to be a very religious person, I am a big believer in love, hope, spirituality, and the comfort they bring to our lives. In "Hallelujah Anyway," Anne Lamott explores the complicated concept of mercy. The dictionary may define mercy as "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm," but Annie's got a better definition: "Mercy is radical kindness," she writes. "Mercy means offering or being offered aid in desperate straits. Mercy is not deserved. It involves absolving the unabsolvable, forgiving the unforgivable." Yes, mercy is complicated, but "Hallelujah Anyway" does a fabulous job of breaking it down so it's easier to understand. And Annie even paints visual pictures of mercy that help you *feel* what mercy is. "Mercy is a cloak that will wrap around you and protect you," she says. "It can block the terror, the dark and most terrifying aspects of your own true self. It is soft, has lots of folds, and enfolds you. It can help you rest and breathe again for the time being, which is all we ever have." Can't you just *feel* those words giving you a hug? Showing mercy isn't an easy thing to do in this day and age, but it's something that's so very necessary. So many of us are struggling and hurting, and we need to be embraced and connect with each other. Because, as Annie states, "the last word will not be our bad thoughts and behavior, but mercy, love, and forgiveness." Sure, people come in all different shapes, sizes, colors, religions, and ethnicities. But the bottom line is, despite all our differences, we are all human beings. And we all deserve mercy. And the way we start making that possible is to accept one another for what we are. In what I found to be the most powerful line in all of "Hallelujah Anyway," Lamott tells us: "Polite inclusion is the gateway drug to mercy." On the first page of Chapter One, Annie writes about "scary, unsettling times" — times "when we know that we need help or answers but we're not sure what kind." We look and look, tearing apart our lives like we're searching for car keys in our couch, and we come up empty-handed. Then when

we're doing something stupid, like staring at the dog's mismatched paws, we stumble across what we needed to find. Or even better, it finds us. At this point in my life, when I'm going through still *more* trying times, I truly needed it. "Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy." I'm so grateful that Anne Lamott put it out there for me to find. You should go find it, too. I guarantee it will make you feel better and give you a little bit of hope for the world we live in today.

I pre-ordered this book because I wanted it as quickly as possible. It came to my door the morning of April 4. I thought I would start reading it later in the day but when I looked at it, I thought the book wasn't very long so I would read just a few pages. I began and never put it down until I finished it in the wee hours of the next day. I began to underline what I wanted to remember or deeply think about. When I finished I realized I had underlined, or put a star by a word, of the entire book. Every phrase, every story, every word and Bible verse became precious to me. Anne Lamont outdid herself writing this book. Did I weep at times-- yes. Did I see myself--yes. Did she give me hope--- YES. She is so mercifully human in her Christian walk. Merciful to saved the lost and dying, suffering world. I relate to her writings as if she was apart of me. Thank, thank for your grace and mercy

The truth for me is this: "Mercy," more than anything, was a word of exclamation, sometimes paired with "Lord have..." or "Lordy..." In my background of experience mercy was given by God, not by mere mortals. Anne Lamott changed all that, filling a big pot hole in my own understanding of love and compassion: Mercy is each person's priceless wild card, given by God in the game of life, that transforms anger and guilt into kindness and compassion. This isn't a simple concept but rather one that sits at the crossroads of self and others merging with love and forgiveness, OR resentment and hate. Lamott's guides the reader through Mercy's rocky terrain with wonderful stories of how she and others have played their hands; and what she's learned along the way. I greatly appreciate her tackling this timely concept, in today's world, Mercy needs to be shared now, possibly more than ever.

Parts were great but I was a little dissapointed overall, having said that still love Anne Lamott and her wonderful sense of humor that quirkiness that I can relate to still shined through. Also love love love her honesty and keeping it real, parts of the book I found hard to follow but it was still worth the read.

Mercy, mercy, mercy...divine and human. In her usual mix of side-eye, humor and deep wisdom, Anne LaMott nailed it again! God gives us MERCY so that we can show MERCY to all the rest of His kids. A gift of words once again.

This book created some wonderful discussions. Throughout life we all have had our ups and downs. Most of us have not experienced the variety of highs and lows by the author, but it did touch on some common issues. Finding a suitable home church does require a warm extended hand and heart.

Anne Lamott always "says it how it is", which is why I love reading and re-reading her books. This one doesn't disappoint.

It makes one think about others in a most profound way!

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