

Anne Lamott

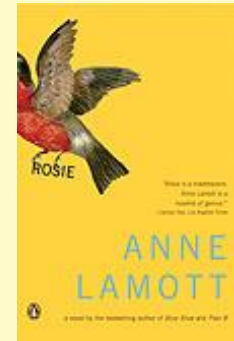
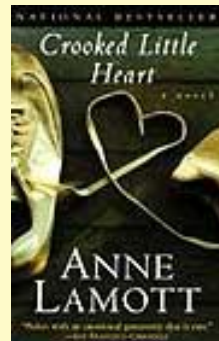
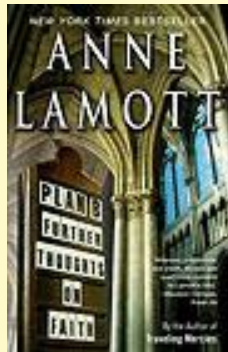
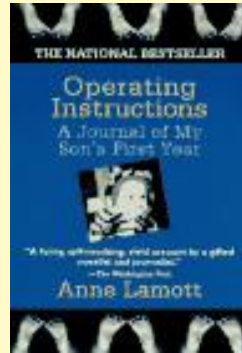
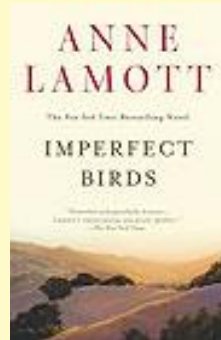
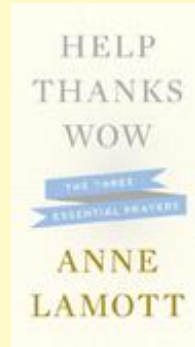
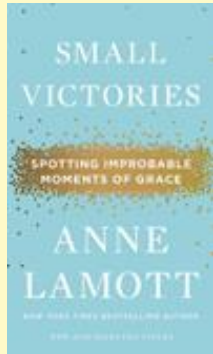
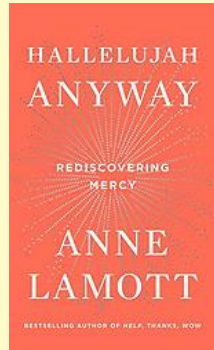
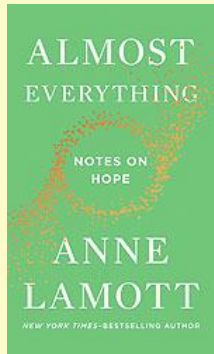
“Anne Lamott is a cause for celebration. [Her] real genius lies in capturing the ineffable, describing not perfect moments, but imperfect one...perfectly.”

The New Yorker

“Anne Lamott is walking proof that a person can be both reverent and irreverent in the same lifetime. Sometimes even in the same breath” SF Chronicle

ANNE LAMONT

Guru of Optimism



Lamott was born April 10, 1954 in [San Francisco](#), and is a graduate of [Drew School](#). She was a student at [Goucher College](#) for two years where she wrote for the newspaper. Her father, [Kenneth Lamott](#), was also a writer. Her first published novel *Hard Laughter* was written for him after his diagnosis of brain cancer. She has one son, Sam, who was born in August 1989 and a grandson, Jax, born in July 2009.

She is an American novelist and non-fiction writer, a [progressive](#) political activist, public speaker, and writing teacher. Lamott is based in [Marin County, California](#), her nonfiction works are largely autobiographical. Marked by their self-deprecating humor and openness, Lamott's writings cover such subjects as [alcoholism](#), [single-motherhood](#), [depression](#), and [Christianity](#).

Lamott's life was documented in [Freida Lee Mock](#)'s 1999 documentary *Bird by Bird with Annie: A Film Portrait of Writer Anne Lamott*. Because of the documentary and her following on Facebook and other online networks, she is often called the "People's Author".

Personal life

On April 13, 2019, when Lamott was 65, she wed for the first time. She married Neal Allen, 63, a former vice president for marketing at the McKesson Corporation in San Francisco. The couple had met in August 2016 through OurTime, a matchmaking site for people over 50. He was a twice-divorced father of four, who had left his job at McKesson to devote himself to writing. He was living alone in a house in the woods in Lagunitas, Calif. She was the mother of 29-year-old Sam Lamott and the grandmother of his son, 9-year-old Jax Lamott. Seven months after Anne Lamott and Neal Allen's first date, they bought a run-down house together in Fairfax, Calif., which they renovated and made their shared home.

I try to write the books I would love to come upon, that are honest, concerned with real lives, human hearts, spiritual transformation, families, secrets, wonder, craziness—and that can make me laugh. When I am reading a book like this, I feel rich and profoundly relieved to be in the presence of someone who will share the truth with me, and throw the lights on a little, and I try to write these kinds of books. Books, for me, are medicine

[Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith](#) // This was the first faith-based book by Lamott I read, and it made me declare her a new favorite back in 2014. I wrote this as my initial review: She's frank, honest, refreshing, sentimental, wise and witty. An author with dreadlocks that shares thoughts on faith but isn't afraid of cussing is my kind of author. This book is a great collection of Anne's "thoughts on faith" -- a definite must-read. (All still true) *Rachel Dawson*

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The core theme of “Almost Everything” is the quandary of how not to hate. Although there are some great sections on joy — she’s like a funky, flower-power lady channeling C. S. Lewis about being designed for joy, making a sly argument from design for ultimate meaning — and plenty of upbeat stories; she is sincerely worried about the damages to our soul when we hate.

She quotes Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King Jr., elegant reminders that hate not only isn’t very effective but belittles our own souls.

“It may be comforting for a bit, she admits, but, “regrettably, it’s malignant.” I wonder how many readers will nod in recognition when she tells of enjoying her loathing. “It’s not white-hot hate,” she says, “as I can’t afford to be ignited and let it consume my life, but there is a lot of heat in there, a combination of sickness and fire. The fever makes me into a war zone of blasts, rubble, mission creep, and the ministrations of my own private USO.

It steals from me what one might call my better angels, my higher self, my center; c’est la guerre.”

Byron Borger Post Gazette

“The profession of teaching has taught me that Lamott’s view of merciful action is impractical and improper. She thinks that “over and over, in spite of our awfulness and having squandered our funds, the ticket-taker at the venue waves us on through” (138). I tend to err on the side of believing there is no such thing as a free lunch. What is merciful is not always just. What is just is not always compassionate. Justice can be very unkind.

“Not that I expect her to read this, but if she does, perhaps I’m just giving Lamott an opportunity to work on her own instincts toward mercy. How she processes her feelings about this criticism may offer a chance for personal growth. In describing a personal rivalry she quietly built up inside herself with regard to another unnamed writer, she says she understood well how “a blend of damage, obsessiveness, envy, and empathy was an occupational requirement for writers. Live by the sword, die by the sword” (137). Of my sword I shall make mercy? Ugh.

“Probably I’m not cut out to give opinions on contemporary spiritual teachers like Lamott. Good for her for feeling the feels and trying to get them on paper. I lack the pathos for it, or at least pathos lacks the credibility for it with me. Pathos may be a reason to act, but it never builds a strong argument because at a minimum it defies intellectual rigor and sometimes even basic fairness. It rarely transfers easily from situation to situation. Mercy must be more than what your heart tells you to do. Though I am happy to agree that the perfect is the enemy of the good, pathos is not necessarily its most natural ally. But I can hallelujah anyway.”

From a longer review by Megan Volpert in PopMatters 22 May 2017

TED Talk

12 Truths I Learned From
Life and Writing

2017

