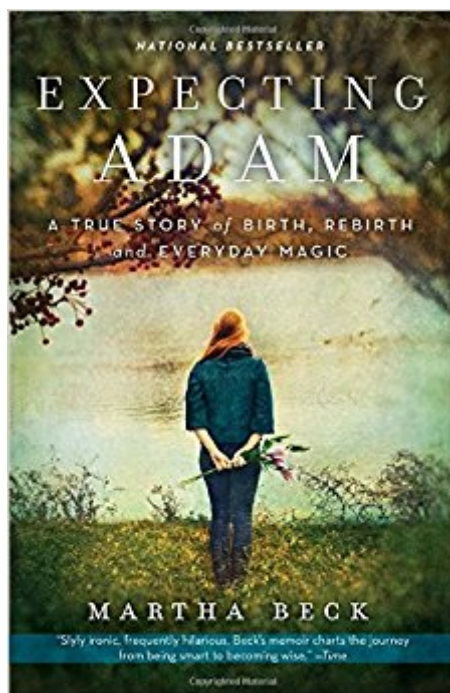


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# Expecting Adam: A True Story Of Birth, Rebirth, And Everyday Magic



## Synopsis

“A wonderful book, funny unbelievably tender, and smart. It shimmers.”—Anne Lamott  
Includes an all-new afterword about Adam. John and Martha Beck had two Harvard degrees apiece when they conceived their second child. Further graduate studies, budding careers, and a growing family meant major stress—not that they’d have admitted it to anyone (or themselves). As the pregnancy progressed, Martha battled constant nausea and dehydration. And when she learned her unborn son had Down syndrome, she battled nearly everyone over her decision to continue the pregnancy. She still cannot explain many of the things that happened to her while she was expecting Adam, but by the time he was born, Martha, as she puts it, “had to unlearn virtually everything Harvard taught [her] about what is precious and what is garbage.”

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Expecting Adam is an autobiographical tale of an academically oriented Harvard couple who conceive a baby with Down’s syndrome and decide to carry him to term. Despite everything Martha Beck and her husband John know about themselves and their belief system, when Martha gets accidentally pregnant and the fetus is discovered to have Down’s syndrome, the Becks find they cannot even consider abortion. The presence of the fetus that they each, privately, believe is a familiar being named Adam is too strong. As Martha’s terribly difficult pregnancy progresses, odd coincidences and paranormal experiences begin to occur for both Martha and John, though for months they don’t share them with each other. Martha’s pregnancy and Adam (once born) become

the catalyst for tremendous life changes for the Becks. Focusing primarily on the pregnancy but floating back and forth between the present and recent and distant past, Martha Beck's well-written, down-to-earth, funny, heart-rending, and tender book transcends the cloying tone of much spiritual literature. Beck is trained as a methodical academician. Because of her step-by-step explanation of her own progress from doubt to belief, she feels like a reliable witness, and even the most skeptical readers may begin to doubt their senses. When she describes an out-of-body experience, we, too, feel ourselves transported to a pungent, noisy hawker center in Singapore. We, too, feel calming, invisible, supporting hands when she falls. Yet, whether or not readers believe in Beck's experiences is ultimately a moot point. There is no doubt that Adam--a boy who sees the world as a series of connections between people who love each other--is a tremendous gift to Beck, her family, and all who have the honor of knowing him. --Ericka Lutz --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wickedly funny and wrenchingly sad memoirs of a young mother awaiting the birth of a Down syndrome baby while simultaneously pursuing a doctorate at Harvard. Sociologist Beck, now a columnist for Mademoiselle and a regular on the television show Good Day Arizona, became pregnant with her second child in September 1987, a time she and her husband now refer to as "the month It All Went To Hell." To put it mildly, the unexpected pregnancy complicated their busy lives and academic careers. At the time, Beck kept a voluminous and detailed journal of her thoughts, conversations, and experiences, which provided the basis for these memoirs. Early in the pregnancy, Beck began having paranormal experiences that took auditory, visual, and tactile form. In what she refers to as "the Seeing Thing," she would see brief, vivid images of where her husband was on his frequent trips to Asia. Calming voices spoke to her (and to her husband) in times of stress, and invisible helpers rescued her and her young daughter from a burning building. A Mormon turned atheist, Beck cannot explain the presence of comforting spiritual beings during her pregnancy, but she accepts them as real. Once Adam was delivered, she no longer felt "like the focus of all that magic." Adam himself became the source of magic in her life, teaching her values unlike those she had learned at Harvard. In her son she sees wisdom, beauty, and a way of looking at the world that is astonishing and joyous. Besides a sense of humor that pokes as much fun at herself as anyone, Beck has both a sharp eye and a sharp tongue. Her portraits of Harvard academics, omniscient doctors, and uptight in-laws are priceless. Even skeptics will find magic in this story, and parents of a Down syndrome child will cherish it. -- Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this

title.

I loved this book insanely. It's about transforming from a person-who-has-it-all-figured-out to a person who opens up to the miraculous. "We will all be less hurt by opening--opening our hopes, our delights, our sorrows, our shattered and reborn dreams--than we will if we remain closed." And here's why: "Angels, or for that matter any forms of goodness, function like water; they run into any opening they are given." I highly identified with over-valuing of intellect, planning and will-power...and then all of that changing in the face of life crisis. It is crisis that teaches us what really matters. It also opens doors to rooms we didn't even know existed. As she began to trust herself to make a new life, "Some people told me I'd thrown my life away. They were right. But the life I threw away never fit me well... In the [new] life ... everything was transmuted into its opposite: grief turned out to be joy wearing a flimsy mask; danger turned into deep security; disability became genius; and death, the ultimate catastrophe, shimmered, shifted, and showed itself as just another sort of birth."

I have read most of Martha Beck's books, but this one is probably my favorite. It is personal, fascinating and an amazing story. She is also an excellent writer and draws you into her personal journey through this pregnancy that will give you a far different perspective of ivy league education, over-achievement and the gifts that were brought into her life via her son. It was a book that I hated to finish as it had been such an engaging read.

I love this book! From the moment I opened to it's first page until it's last it captured me and all still I wanted more . It touched the awareness in me of a love beyond all description, ever present and available. If ever someone opened themselves to allow themselves to be seen ,it's Martha Beck and I thank her immensely for the beautiful gift that that is. Her courage ,humor and insights make the reading of ever word a total pleasure. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants a look at the human heart with the eyes of the divine.

I couldn't finish this book. It was just too much. Sanctimonious and in need of major editing. If you must, get it free at the library.

I liked the parts about the Harvard mentality, but thought this couple was pretty foolish to get so sucked in and not take into account their own and their family's needs. I don't think you can blame it all on Harvard! Also, all of the coincidences did not ring true to me. The author's experiences of

thought sharing, seeing visions, etc are reported after the fact and are pretty self serving, particularly as she has gone on to be a life coach and motivational writer and speaker. I did like the descriptions of the positives that children with downs syndrome can bring into peoples lives and the importance of early intervention for these children.

Had to read this book as part of my special ed class and although the message it self it good I didn't like the book. I had to get it as a audiobook just to get through it

Wanted to like the story but it became unbelievable. She hates Harvard but mentions it endlessly. As a nurse for over 40 years I have never heard anyone use the term mongoloid idiot. Yes a few older people still use the term mongoloid but not in the demeaning manner she portrays. Her unnamed autoimmune disease smells of nonsense. There are many inconsistencies in this self promoting book.

great read - some parts made me angry - you will have to read to understand that - it's about the fact that just because one is different doesn't make that bad or not worthy. Fear of the unknown - move past the fear and learn to accept

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