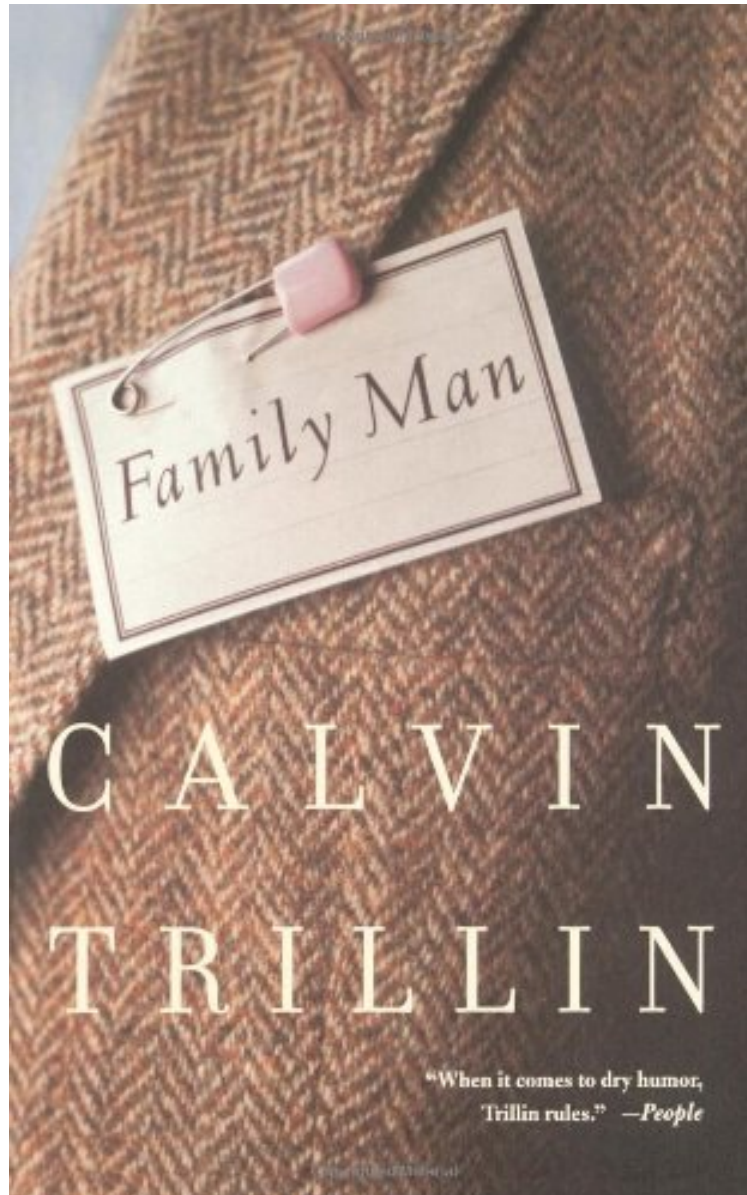


[PDF] Family Man

Family Man

Calvin Trillin

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Calvin Trillin : Family Man before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Family Man:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By K. A. Kelly
Calvin Trillin is a genius.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well-Written, Funny and Engaging
Look At Life With Children
By Jennifer
This book is a collection of 16 essays by Calvin Trillin on the joys and travails of life with children. He has two daughters -- Abigail and Sarah -- and raised them with his wife Alice in Manhattan. (Although raising a family in Manhattan might make it seem like Mr. Trillin is from a rarefied world inaccessible to most of us, I found his writing to be down-to-earth, relatable and his observations about parenting to be fairly universal.) Mr. Trillin is a gifted writer, and I enjoyed reading his thoughts on family life immensely. He has an obvious love for his family, a great eye for detail, and a wonderful sense of humor. This was my first time reading a book by Calvin Trillin. I'd heard of him and seen quotes by him and realized he was perhaps an important contemporary writer, but I'd never taken the time to read one of his books. I can unequivocally tell you that I will be reading more by Mr. Trillin as I think he might be the kind of writer who could write about virtually anything and I would enjoy reading it. This isn't a book that begs for an in-depth review. It is an easy, humorous, enjoyable read that documents the author's life with his two daughters and his thoughts on parenting. More than anything, this book made me wish I could live in the Trillin family. Mr. Trillin seems like a wonderful father with an amusing and fun personality. I was particularly drawn to his love of Halloween, his obvious affection for his wife, and the family's dedication to making elaborate home movies. I wanted to grow up in the Trillin household! While I was reading, I kept marking sections of the book to showcase passages that I think illustrate what a reader can expect in this book. I ended up having so many that I'm just going to go through and pick three or four that will give you the best "feel" for this book. When our older daughter, Abigail, was four years old, she attended a progressive nursery school in lower Manhattan that was sweet and nurturing and, if I may say so, a little bit earnest. It was the sort of place where teachers would say to a kid who had just attacked another kid, "Use words not hands, dear." (At one point, we all began to wonder exactly what the words for sneaking up behind another kid and pulling her hair might be. All I could think of was something like "I'm a nasty little beast who deserves a good hiding.") I tried to fulfill the mandate every American has to convince his children that they have a cushy deal compared with the deprivations and tribulations he had to face as a child. At one point, of course, I had to quit telling them that when I was a little boy in Kansas City, my sister, Sukey, and I walked ten miles barefoot through the snow just to get to school every morning. They got old enough to check it out. This is always an awkward transition for a parent -- the onset of what I think of as the age of independent confirmation of data. It seems to come rather suddenly. One moment, your daughters are accepting everything you say without reservation...the next moment, you've got a couple of private eyes in the house. But we all felt that keeping a dog in the city would be too difficult. That left cats. When the girls were asked why we didn't have one, they always said "Daddy hates cats," to which I always replied, "No, girls, hating cats would be prejudice, and Mommy and I have tried to bring you up to oppose prejudice whenever you encounter it. What might be fair to say is that I have never met a cat I liked." At the very least, parents wonder whether they should worry. I always found it comforting when I'd come across something I could decide not to worry about. Then I could cross it off the list. When Sarah was little, she had an imaginary friend named Craig Binnger. "Imaginary friends are supposed to have names like Jack or Popo or Tillie-bear," I said to Alice. "How come her friend sounds like a life insurance salesman?" Should we worry about that? No. About the Author
Calvin Trillin is the author of 19 previous books, including *American Fried*, *Travels with Alice*, *Remembering Denny* and *Messages from My Father*. A long-time staff writer for *The New Yorker*, he also wrote a column for *Time* and a weekly poem for *The Nation*. He was raised in Kansas City, Missouri and lives in New York City.
Final Thoughts
A fun, smart, delightful collection of essays on family life by a gifted writer. I'll definitely be reading more books by Mr. Trillin.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Portrait of a happy family
By Barbara Rice
I lost my first copy of this book when I visited a relative in the hospital and she asked if I had anything she could read. I liked it enough to go get another one. This is not a "and then we did this and then the next month we did that" sort of diary. Trillin describes the things his family liked to do together, and gradually the picture emerges: parents deeply involved with their children, not talking down to them or treating them as lil' tykes, but giving them a rich family life that includes a well-rounded cultural education (which sounds stuffy: it isn't). Trillin's philosophy is "Either your children are the center of your life, or they're not," and this book details how he and his wife Alice centered their life around their daughters - involving themselves but never helicoptering. This is a lovely story.

Calvin Trillin begins his wise and charming ruminations on family by stating the sum total of his child-rearing advice: "Try to get one that doesn't spit up. Otherwise, you're on your own." Suspicious of any child-rearing theories beyond "Your children are either the center of your life or they're not," Trillin has clearly reveled in the role of family man. Acknowledging the special perils to the privacy of people living with a writer who occasionally remarks, "I hope you're not under the impression that what you just said was off the record," Trillin deals with the subject of family in a way that is loving, honest, and wildly funny in *Family Man*.

.com "Handing out advice on family matters is not my game," begins Calvin Trillin in *Family Man*, and indeed, those in search of practical child-rearing tips would be advised to look elsewhere. What Trillin does have to offer is a series

of witty meditations on the art--not the science--of parenthood. Nobody else has written quite so accurately about the debunking genius of small children. And while Trillin conveys the joys and sorrows of family life with his customary drollness, what really gets him going is the high anxiety of being in loco parentis. When, for example, a study reveals that most of our synapses are formed during infancy, the author is nonplused by the scientific breakthrough. He's quick, though, to latch on to this new opportunity for self-flagellation: This business about the synapses struck me as the sort of finding that could have been designed to add to the concerns of those older parents who already spend some uncomfortable time, while trying to fall asleep at night, thinking of ways that they may have shortchanged their children. Here is an entirely new subject, pushing aside old chestnuts like whether that really was the right summer camp or whether the purchase of the guitar might have been to blame for everything that followed. Now, as they toss and turn, they can envision their children trying to compete in a global economy with reduced brainpower. This beleaguered dad does, it should be said, touch upon a handful of more general topics, including the wacky world of contemporary wedding ceremonies. At the heart of his book, though, is the alternately exasperating and endearing pageant of family life, chez Trillin, which features not only the author's smart-aleck daughters but also his wife and perennial straight (wo)man, Alice. From Library Journal For readers whose nerves are being shattered by all the feuds that are occurring in the human zoo in which we live and are willing to admit frankly that they'd like a little escapist reading, this book should be welcome. Those familiar with Trillin's (Messages from My Father, LJ 5/1/96) columns for Time and his poems in the Nation needn't be told that he can write with ease and spirit upon almost any subject. In this collection of 16 essays, he demonstrates once again that he thoroughly understands the difficult technique of clever light writing and that he can make a silk purse out of such routine merchandise as zipping and unzipping a snowsuit, changing diapers, celebrating Halloween, and eating Thanksgiving dinner?the plain things and everyday events of domestic life. Witty, spontaneously humorous at times, deliciously whimsical at others, and always kindly, Trillin's talk-fest offers a wonderful distraction. Recommended. ?A.J. Anderson, GSLIS, Simmons Coll., Boston Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Trillin follows his tender, loving, and humorous memoir of his pater, Messages from My Father (1996), with this equally fond and funny memoir of being a father. No parental advice issues forth from this guy, who happens to be one of America's favorite ponderers and ruminators; no, he best sums up his sentiment about imparting advice on child rearing with, "Getting advice on the best way to bring up children is like getting advice on the best way to breathe; sooner or later, you're probably going to forget it and go back to your regular old in-and-out." Of course, shying away from child-rearing suggestions does not keep Trillin from proceeding to recollect and reflect on some of the most telling and amusing episodes of fatherhood. He talks about the point when one's children reach the "age of independent confirmation," when they are able to check up on their parents' probably embroidered stories of their childhood. And he thinks about how writers handle real family stories in their fiction. And he has to admit that "children can be easily embarrassed by what their parents do." Trillin has a gift for intelligent humor couched in a felicitous style, appealing to a wide range of readers. Brad Hooper