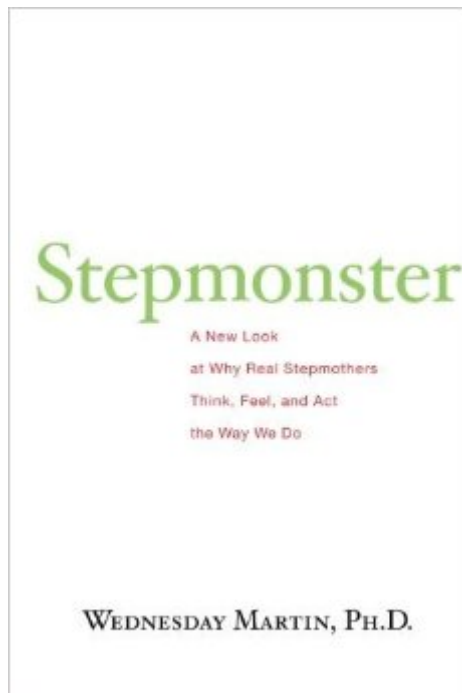


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# Stepmonster: A New Look At Why Real Stepmothers Think, Feel, And Act The Way We Do



## Synopsis

Half of all women in the United States will live with or marry a man with children. And what woman with stepchildren has notâ€”in order to defuse the often overwhelming challenges and anxieties she experiencesâ€”referred to herself as a â€œstepmonsterâ€•? What Hope Edelmanâ€™s book has done for motherless daughters, Wednesday Martinâ€™s empowering and original *Stepmonster* does for stepmothers: unlocks the emotional mysteries of why they think and feel and act the way they do. Martin draws on her own experience as a stepmother, interviews many stepmothers and stepchildren, and gathers insights from literature, psychology, and evolutionary biology to reveal the little-understood realities of this demanding role. *Stepmonster* illuminates the harrowing process of becoming a stepmother, exposes the myths and realities of being married to a man with children, counteracts the prevailing notion that stepmothers are solely responsible for the problems they encounter, identifies the five â€œstep-dilemmasâ€• that create conflict, and considers the emotional and social challenges men with children face when they remarry. *Stepmonster* also sheds light on the history of stepmothering and the previously overlooked legacy of women with stepchildren everywhere. Finally, in an unexpected twist, Martin shows why the myth of the Wicked Stepmother is at once an elaborate cultural fiction and our single best tool for understanding who real stepmothers are and how they feel.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Let me start off by saying that nothing has liberated me from my internal struggles with step-motherhood like this book has. It has allowed me to feel okay about how I feel. Before my marriage I knew I was going to need some good advice on step-mothering so I bought a book on it.

(And many others since) Regrettably, it was not this book as it was not yet published. THIS is the book you need. This book was written by a stepmother, for stepmothers. A negative review of this book could only come from someone who has not experienced step-motherhood! Since many won't read this review in its entirety, I must get this out right now... If you are contemplating marriage to a man with children then let me share a secret that no one shared with me... There isn't anything fun about a step family, and to elaborate, there is nothing fun about being a stepmom. I thought that step-motherhood was a mission I could undertake and I thought my gain was going to be far greater than my loss. I assure you... I was wrong!! No one warned me AT ALL of what I was facing and I am straight up pissed off about that. Being a step-mother makes for a difficult, lonely life and it doesn't ever feel like a real family. So I hate to sound bitter here, but the fact is, I am bitter. Save yourself the heartache. This is not what marriage (or family) was intended to be. Read this book and take heed! If you are not moved to seriously reevaluate your decision to marry this man, then you are a hopeless optimist. You will, throughout your marriage, be able to relate to damn near every sentence in this book. Stepmonster - Even the title might scare you from reading it. Who would want to admit that they might be a Stepmonster? And you could certainly never let anyone see you reading this book.

In a word: "Wow!" This is truly a first-of-its-kind book about stepmothering as it focuses exclusively on the needs, perceptions, emotions and experiences of the stepmother. Thank you, Wednesday Martin, for finally giving stepmothers validation and a voice. Well-written and impeccably sourced, it presents an unflinching look at stepmothering. I couldn't put it down and read it in one day! I know from personal experience, both as a stepmother and stepdaughter, that stepparenting is one of the toughest and most thankless jobs in the world; compassion fatigue is a real risk. And, unfortunately, to date, most of the books disseminated by the blended family/stepparenting industry are child-centric, advising newly-blended families to put the needs of the children from the prior marriage first. Add to that all of the messages from popular culture, media, etc. that subtly and not-so-subtly vilify stepmothers (e.g., "Cinderella") and it should come as no surprise that second marriages with stepchildren fail at such an alarming rate. "Stepmonster" brings a fresh perspective to this particular sub-genre of self-help books; I sincerely hope it is but the first of many books to fairly explore the precarious role of the stepmother in modern family life. My personal take-away message from this book was that, as stepparents and stepchildren, we are, to each other, non-essential personnel and must strive to form our bonds based upon civility and mutual respect (picking up after oneself doesn't hurt either!). We don't have to have a perfect relationship or one

that mimics the biological parent-child relationship.

I approached reading this book with great trepidation and ambivalence. With a title like Stepmonster, who wouldn't be intimidated? But once I began, I was captivated with Dr. Martin's voice--her humor, her personal experience, her candid revelations on some of the most uncomfortable emotions that stepmothers often feel. She brought to the surface issues that we stepmoms are too terrified to admit to lest we appear to be emotionally unstable and worse, "unmaternal." She doesn't tiptoe around the unspeakable taboo topics--jealousy toward the stepchild, dealing with a stepchild's possessiveness of her father, resentment toward the husband for not prioritizing, exclusion, isolation, loneliness, self-doubt. She reminds the reader that we are not just stepmothers, we are human beings, with very real feelings that are the result often times of true events and occurrences. I read this book for many reasons. I am a stepmother as well as a step-daughter, my children have stepmothers and my own mother was a stepmother. What I have learned in my personal experience is that being a stepmom is often thankless and ungratifying. Give-and-take precepts in this role are practically non-existent. Stepmothers are subject to the highest standards to provide unconditional love toward the stepchild--to be a chef, a maid, a laundress, a chauffeur, a tutor and a financial resource. The stepmother is a walking irony. Society expects that the stepmom respect the boundaries and feelings not only that of the stepchild, but her husband/the father, his ex-wife/the mother, the former in-laws, all the while without expecting reciprocity for her own exploited boundaries and feelings--Dr. Martin's term: self-abnegation. The stepmother is often the fall guy in the family system.

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