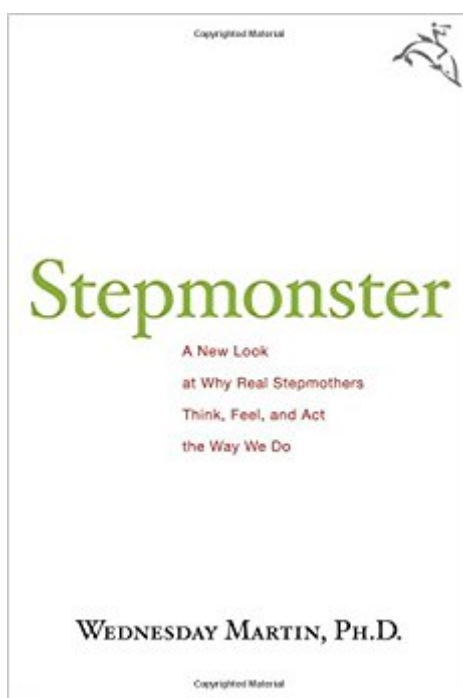


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# Stepmonster: A New Look At Why Real Stepmothers Think, Feel, And Act The Way We Do



## Synopsis

An honest and groundbreaking guide to understanding the complicated emotions that develop between stepmothers and children. When faced with often overwhelming challenges, what woman with stepchildren is unfamiliar with that “stepmonster” feeling? Half of all women in the United States will live with or marry a man with children. To guide women new to this role and empower those who are struggling with it Wednesday Martin draws upon her own experience as a stepmother. She’s frank about the harrowing process of becoming a stepmother, she considers the myths and realities of being married to a man with children, and she counteracts the cultural notion that stepmothers are solely responsible for the problems that often develop. Along the way, she interviews other stepmothers and stepchildren and offers up fascinating insights from literature, anthropology, psychology, and evolutionary biology that explain the little-understood realities of this unique parent-child relationship and in an unexpected twist shows why the myth of the Wicked Stepmother is the single best tool for understanding who real stepmothers are and how they feel.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Fascinating... Informative and carefully researched." -Salon.com "[Martin's] insights and advice are more clear and articulate than those offered in any other book on the subject that's currently available." -LA Examiner "For women who find themselves in a similar family dynamic, Martin's book should come as a welcome relief, and proof that they are not alone." -Bust

WEDNESDAY MARTIN holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Yale. She was a regular contributor to the New York Post's parenting page for several years, and her work has appeared in a number of national magazines. Martin, a stepmother for nine years, lives with her husband and their two sons. [www.wednesdaymartin.com](http://www.wednesdaymartin.com)

I am having my husband read it and he wants all three of my step daughters to read it. Step parents will feel so much better about themselves and the world and biological parents will as well. Step children that are fixed in their opinions one way or another may or may not be able to admit certain things. I say this having had all roles.

This book validated what I have felt for 22 years. It brought so much understanding to me regarding my husbands actions or lack of. It also brought insight into why stepkids do what they do. Knowing that I will be the outsider along with a double standard has given me strength in myself and I'm not crazy. Knowing other stepmothers go through the doubt, depression, judgements and it's not our fault has lifted such a burden and hurt. I am thankful to have found this book. A must read for any step Monster!

This book gave me a lot of comfort in knowing I was not alone in what I was experiencing. I also felt like less of a monster for some of the negative emotions I was feeling towards my stepdaughter. The only drawback of this book is that most of the husbands used in the stories seem quite unsupportive, which is not the case in many households (mine included). Also, it did not provide assistance/guidance for when things go really really bad. Ours is a particularly bad case of "parental alienation" by the birth mom and the step daughter is suffering from a severe cases of mental anxiety as a result. This book is more helpful in traditional settings where a child is having normal difficulties adjusting.

So helpful to hear that there is no normal, it's okay to hate the word blended, and being a stepmother really is the hardest thing in the world. A must read for anyone who stepparents, and the spouses that don't always understand us. I'm a resident stepmom, my two stepdaughters live with my spouse and I full time, and I am LUCKY to have the relationships complete with mutual affection and love. I'm also lucky to have a bigger say in their everyday, but this was a GREAT reminder to take care of myself, take care of my marriage, and it was reassuring to hear someone else echo the

unpopular thoughts I have sometimes: fundamentally, these little ones aren't "mine" and don't come from my body or brain and as a result, their wellbeing is important to me, but not something that can be entirely set on my shoulders.

This book was a lifesaver! After being a terrible step-mother in my first marriage, I was terrified of making the same mistakes the second time around. This book says what everybody is too scared to say in this politically correct world gone mad that we live in. Your stepchildren probably won't like you at first and you shouldn't let it bother you. It's ok to not be interested in doing everything with them and your spouse. It's ok to have ground rules and boundaries that protect your sanity and your marriage first. I am much more successful this time not because I have changed, but because my attitudes and expectations have changes. This book is a big reason for that.

"Stepmonster" is the most emancipating and liberating book that I have read in years! Wednesday Martin did a thorough research and put together some of the most phenomenal information and shares it so that you become liberated from the prison bars within and set free. She validates and vindicates so many questions that have plagued a stepmother and helps you realize what you have experienced is actually quite normal. The real life sharing from those interviewed were completely believable and oddly familiar. Absolutely life changing!After reading several books on the subject over the years I found myself devouring her knowledge and information that is deeply perceptive. She hits every area with precision and drives home the reality of what is involved. She addresses every issue head-on and makes no apologies about it. I can only say that "I Am So Blessed and Thankful that I Am Not a Stepmother." I was never allowed to be one and thus I have been spared so much of what I read about in this book. I will always be eternally grateful to those who did not allow me to be one thus saving me a lot of grief. Some profound parts of the book which literally had me dancing a new dance and are as follows. I hope you too will pick up her book and begin a journey of self-liberation and freedom unlike any other. It will change your life!Page 20 Although it's a disappointment, it's no real surprise that when wives of men with children and those children come together, regardless of good intentions, we are on a collision course of sorts.Page 40 The stepmother lives outside of time, at the interstice of fact and fiction, of myth and history, rendering them nearly indistinguishable.Page 64 Our stepchildren do not feel like our children. And so logically, inevitably many of us do not-cannot-feel maternal toward them. While we did indeed choose a man with children, it would be disingenuous for most of us) to pretend that we chose the children. We chose him, and they came on the side.Page 84 Failing to connect, failing to fix, in

something women take to heart. Page 85 We need to allow ourselves to be less than all-loving all the time and to forgive ourselves for responding like human beings rather than saints to the par-for-the-course slights and oversights from our stepchildren that often feel deliberate. "I feel like, to succeed as a stepmother, you have to be either really assertive about not being stepped on or incredibly self-abnegating," a woman whose twenty-something stepdaughter veered from being prickly and standoffish to blatantly hostile told me? The author goes on and explains how to stop the cycle.....in this chapter. Page 99 The one part of this chapter was the most liberating of all....where she speaks of disengaging...Reading about disengaging made me realize that I often inadvertently carried much of my husband's pain and often tried to help with no success. I had no clue who these strangers were nor they me, therefore wrong assumptions and choices were made and failed. Just disengage....DISENGAGING To disengage--to simply try less or stop trying at all--requires accepting a number of truths about being married to a man with children. \*They are not your children. \*You are not responsible for overcoming their upbringing or any emotional or social problems they have. \* You are not responsible for what kind of people they are. You are not responsible for what kind of people they become. \*These responsibilities belong to your husband, who will likely not raise his kids (or make interventions with his adult kids) the way you would. Having accepted this reality, you then make a promise to yourself: I will never give them the opportunity to treat me disrespectfully again. Page 101 If you have stepchildren of any age, the most important person in your life is your husband. He is, quite simply, the person who in large part determines your happiness---or misery--in your step-situation. His actions and attitudes will dictate whether your quality of steplife will be extraordinarily stressful, basically tolerable, or even enjoyable, despite the inevitable difficulties and bumps along the way. Page 128 The downside is that adult stepchildren tend to hold their stepmothers responsible for their fathers' behavior, which they interpret as choice. Chapter 10 is a phenomenal chapter on adult stepchildren...As Wednesday explains that, "Many adults disavow the significance of getting a stepmother in their late teens, twenties, thirties, forties, and even fifties. "My dad married her when I was already out of the house, so it's not really relevant the whole stepmother thing to me" and "My siblings and I are adults, so it's pretty much a non-issue" were the frequent mantras of the adult stepchildren I spoke to. ....what puzzled me the most was that these complaints about stepmothers sounded on the surface rather petty, the types of things a grownup of goodwill might easily accommodate. Page 250 In a number of instances, I was taken by surprise by how "Stuck" many of the otherwise emotionally mature and high-functioning adults I interviewed seemed and the vehemence with which they sometimes expressed their disapproval of their fathers' union with, as one woman in her thirties put it, "Dad's wife, or whatever she is." I wanted to

understand just what makes an adult child unable to feel close to a stepmother, and vice versa. Why do antagonisms persist between basically well-adjusted adults-adults who just so happen to be stepchildren and stepmothers and who are generally likeable in their own right?Page 251 Role ambiguity and adult stepchildren's continuing ambivalence, the sense - even if it is unacknowledged-- that accepting us would be a betrayal of Mother, that Father loving us is a betrayal of both Mother and them, can make matters more complicated still.

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