

Becoming

by Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama opens up about her upbringing and the importance of family. She describes in great detail the different memories, and lessons she has learned as a child from immediate and extended family members that have helped shaped her to the woman she has become, and still strives to become. She talks openly and honestly about the struggles that many working women feel; trying to be at the top of your game in your career while attempting to balance being a wife, mother, daughter and friend.

Chances are most of us will never be the First Lady. We can only imagine and fantasize what it must be like to live in the White House. Michelle Obama provides us with a realistic perspective and is open about the not-so-glamorous reality of being married to the President of the United States of America. – Dr. Michele Winchester-Vega, DSW, LCSW-R

Becoming is a memoir that provides a glimpse into the childhood experiences and adult decisions that shaped and influenced Michelle Obama's life. Through her personal recollections, she imparts her strongly held convictions about the meaning of family bonds, friendships, and marriage. She openly shares about her internal struggle to find purpose in her life and the pain of reconciling loss and grief. She readily pays tribute to the significant individuals that inspired her journey.

Throughout the telling of her life story she indirectly advises, cautions, and instructs. She attributes her practice of journal writing to her husband and has found it to be equally "therapeutic and clarifying". She also praises him for his unwavering questions of what motivates her and what causes her pain. In her narrative about a dying friend, who was "stuffing herself full of what the world had to give", she reminds the readers of the wonder yet brevity of life. Regarding the arduous process of finding a career path, she emphasizes the importance of synchronizing one's passions with meaningful employment to facilitate greater personal fulfillment. In her honesty she admits to harboring truths that are both faced and ignored. Michelle Obama's life epitomizes another adage she resolutely believes, "inspiration on its own is shallow; you have to back it up with hard work".

Becoming depicts the difficult yet necessary and rewarding individuation process that each person must experience in order to reach their full potential. I would recommend this book to those striving to self-actualize. It can be justifiably utilized as a supplemental therapeutic tool. - Marian S. Sanborn, LMSW, CASAC

Michelle Obama's *Becoming* is an inspiring and relatable tale of her life's journey. The former First Lady provides an open and honest account of the joys and challenges of childhood, young adulthood, as well as, those of married life and parenthood that we can all relate to. What I found particularly inspiring was how courageously she revealed, that in spite of her many accomplishments, she often struggled with insecurity and self-doubt. I believe many women and people-of-color may have similar experiences while navigating the world of higher education and professional achievement. *Becoming* is a personal testimony of one who pushed past barriers both within and without and motivates its readers to do the same. Inspiring us to have the courage to set higher expectations for ourselves than others may have for us. Also, to embrace the social and familial supports that we have around us, and even the courage to seek out professional help when needed.

One portion that really brought this out was when, as an adult, she came to realize that she didn't get to her place in life because she was necessarily better or smarter than her peers, but because, as she insightfully stated, "I just had the advantage of an advocate." This reveals the importance and the power of the work we do everyday. Whether it be as therapists, as spouses, as parents, or as friends, being advocates we can play such a crucial role in the success and achievement of another's journey of "*Becoming*" their ideal self.

I believe this book to be a very empowering read, not just for women or people-of-color, but for all people, especially young people. It leaves the reader feeling motivated, encouraged, and self-confident in spite of the the various failures and victories of life's journey. – Brandi R. Perusomala, LCSW

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To say that I admire Michelle Obama, would be an understatement. I gifted myself her book both the textbook and audio for my birthday! It's not only about politics! It's more importantly the representation of who she is to many minority women like myself. Through *Becoming*, she allows us to look into the world of the real person who through hard work, opportunities and determination, not only in 2018 became the most admired woman in America and her book the best selling book, but her humanity will surely remain to be a forever footprint in our history. Through her book, you understand the reasons for her priorities and commitments. Our decisions are rooted in our experiences. She provides you with an intimate look into her life as it evolves through the historical contexts of our society. You are welcomed to know and feel what it means to be African-American, a woman, daughter, sister, family member, friend, community member, worker, wife and mother. Her narrative, echoed the feelings and thoughts of many of my patients. The struggles of those deemed less than by our society's institutional racism. The forever emptiness in your heart after losing a loved one. The fear of never being able to be a mother, after a miscarriage, and the hope that comes with trying in vitro fertilization or the possibility of adoption. The loyalty needed to advocate for the needs of your community. The guilt of working mothers. The yearning for a husband that works 24/7. The internal turmoil when you play so many roles that you forget to play your own. The constant push and pull of daily life that leave you both exhausted and restless at night. The pride, joy and happiness that come from seeing that all of these sacrifices are meant to create something greater than what you could have ever imagine. – Nancy Arocho-Mercado, LCSW-R