



The Unavailable Father

by Sarah Simms Rosenthal



The phenomenon of the unavailable father is unfortunately very common, which attracted us to consider reading about it. It offers the reader an opportunity to consider our relationships with our fathers (and mothers) and in their ability to be present and emotionally available.

The first couple of chapters seem to be sufficient in making the case for how abusive, unavailable, absent, mentally ill or alcoholic fathers affect their girl's identity as unlovable or unworthy. It seems obvious that the same injury could be made from mothers and that the gender of the children isn't unique as the author suggests.

The author does use her personal experience as a daughter to offer insight: "I wondered if my father's rage rose from anguish at loving two women and hurting them both, at betraying the man he had meant to be ... perhaps I filled the role of a woman in waiting who he could punish for his flaws ... I realized the past was drawing me into abusive relationships." ~ **Dr. Michele Winchester-Vega**



This is a must-read for women seeking understanding, coping skills, and a pathway to recovery from an unavailable father. The book details the lives of several professional women who grew up with dads who were emotionally and physically absent.

Those avoiding fathers deprived their daughters of unconditional love and a sense of security. In later years, this lack of closeness interfered with these women's ability to couple in adulthood. Rosenthal suggests ways to assess the damage and go forward to embrace the healing process. ~ **Diane Light-Spiro**



This is a worthy book for anyone wanting to understand the importance and impact that the father-daughter relationship has on the development of girls. Rosenthal shares her personal story and the stories of many of her adult patients who had unavailable fathers and how that directly negatively affected their abilities to have healthy intimate relationships in adulthood. This book focuses on six archetypes of fathers and how girls are affected by them. I would recommend the book to anyone wanting to appreciate the power of the father-daughter relationship.

~ **Suzanne Vizethann**



This book is wonderfully written and a great read. I both love and appreciate the author's use of personal examples, especially her own. This gives light to the idea of a self concept that has its foundation in early childhood. Many women struggle with low self-esteem at one point or another in life and so often have given value to the mother's relationship with her daughter as having fueled this.

I really like that this book illuminated the role of the father in affecting the self-esteem of their daughters. This offers women the insight to understand the choices they make in partners and normalizes the dysfunction that they struggle with. I would recommend this book. ~ **Victoria Sullivan**



This book has been helpful in my work with women who have struggled with maintaining healthy relationships. It begins to shed light on why some women struggle with interpersonal relationships. Readers are able to identify with the descriptions of the types of fathers and put a name to their own experiences. The chapter on recovery outlines useful steps to promote healing.

I would recommend this book to people who are in the early stages of recognizing unhealthy relationship patterns in their life. ~ **Susan McVey**



This book nicely illustrates the psychosocial difficulties that develop as a result of problems between fathers and daughters. The personal stories of the women presented in this book, including Rosenthal's, help the reader easily relate.

It is also helpful to see how women have flourished in their personal and professional lives with the help of psychotherapy to overcome the fact that their fathers did not offer security or unconditional love. ~ **Dianna Chillo**