



Wild Mama: One Woman's Quest to Live Her Best Life, Escape Traditional Parenthood, and Travel the World

Carrie Visintainer

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When Carrie Visintainer became a mother at the age of thirty-two, she worried it was all over, that her adventurous life was done. World travel? Adios. Solo explorations in the mountains? Ciao. Creative outlets? She wondered, are diapers my new white canvas? Immersed in a whirlwind of sleeplessness and spit-up, she was madly in love with her new baby, yet also felt her adventurous spirit and core identity crumbling.

So Carrie laced up her boots and set out on a soul-searching journey, with revelations near and far. Inside a local Walmart, she realized that new motherhood is like traveling to a foreign country, with a new vocabulary, unknowable customs, and extreme jetlag. Lying in a yurt in the Colorado forest, she came to terms with her postpartum depression. While sailing on a gulet off the coast of Turkey, she examined feelings of guilt about leaving her child in pursuit of adventure. And then, while perched in a handsome stranger's motorcycle sidecar in the Mexican jungle, she found herself face-to-face with her central quandary: Domesticity vs. Wanderlust.

Finally, she discovered she could—and should—have both.

Wild Mama: One Woman's Quest to Live Her Best Life, Escape Traditional Parenthood, and Travel the World Details

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From Reader Review Wild Mama: One Woman's Quest to Live Her Best Life, Escape Traditional Parenthood, and Travel the World for online ebook

Cynthia Koukol says

I liked this at first but after a while I just felt like I was reading the same scenario over and over again. By the end I was just ready for it to be done. While I related to the wanderlust just on a different level and in a different way, I often felt like I was reading the memoirs of a woman going through more of a mid-life crisis and less of a new mother loss of identity. Granted my daughter is 9, so I'm well passed this stage in life. Not to mention I never really experienced it on her level so I might not be the best to comment on it. I just know that this just wasn't for me on some levels but on others I didn't mind it.

Casey Wright says

I related to this book on so many levels; from motherhood, to finding creativity, to wanderlust, and the value of staying true to self in chaos. She was able to articulate so beautifully and so unselfishly those early days/years of motherhood and the guilt that we all feel when trying to make our way back to our true selves. Loved this book and found it to be a huge comfort. I hope the author writes more!

Meghan Fleury says

Unfortunately, it just wasn't great. All of the topics and instances that the author wrote about where so briefly mentioned that the only ones I could really identify with were the ones that mirrored my own experiences... but that wouldn't really help with a new mama who is anxious about beginning parenthood. One thing I can mention though, is that it struck me as very useful: The author would bring her notebook, her journal, when she would go to all of these different destinations, even in the deep jungle. He was able to take field notes in the depths of motherhood, where maybe your thoughts are hazy but you can make notes and go back to regroup when the haze has cleared.

Ferren Ytsma says

One of the best books I've read lately. I truly feel I could have written it myself. Carrie feels like an old friend - the one who tells it like it is, doesn't sugar coat, and can admit her faults when necessary. She truly details the pull of a mother between her love for her children and the loss of her former self. It's also amazing the way she has learned to combine the two! One of my favourite things to read was Carrie's "self talk". An incredibly relatable memoir!

Keri says

I loved this book. I think it should be required reading for all moms!

Karen Traweek says

I guess I was expecting someone who was more wild and had more zing.... she was pretty "ploddy" and whined a lot in my opinion.

Beth says

Wonderful. She captures a side of motherhood that isn't as widely talked about- the mother's identity outside her child.

caroline says

I revived this book as part of the First Reads program. Carrie is definitely an inspiration to all women! This book wasn't my fav because I do not have children but I can connect with her wild fun loving spirit. Can't wait to pass this one on to a new mama! Perhaps, they will know more about the whole kid thing :)

Kimberly Thompson says

Carrie is a woman who wants family, but her wanderlust keeps calling. She finally settles down and with her husband figures out ways to keep having adventures and traveling.

I am inspired by this brave woman who faced some scary situations, but managed to continue living a full life. Not that travel is required for that, she even says find what your passionate about and do that to have a whole life. Even if solo trips camping or overseas aren't my passion, I have things I do solely for me apart from being a mom and wife.

Every adventure she has some doubts and regrets that make her wish she were home with her kids, but she has a sort of mantra that reminds her she chose her path and that lightens her mood and keeps her going.

Susie says

At first I thought the author was just so relatable, balancing wanderlust with career and family life. I thought, I'm her, I could be her! But then every chapter has the same formula. She encounters some obstacle, and then she has a completely new outlook or self actualisation. It's a bit like, I tripped and fell on my roller blades and when I got up I had a whole new perspective on life. It beats you over the head a little bit. Almost like

the end of an episode of *Modern Family* with a lesson learnt and a voiceover. I think I would've enjoyed the book better if she had omitted the last paragraph of every chapter.

On the other hand, she's a brave soul and writer for exposing her vulnerabilities, and her way of life is definitely inspirational.

Amy Rivers says

The thing I love most about *Wild Mama* is that it's a perfect reminder that life is what we make of it. Carrie Visintainer talks about her life as she's created it. It's not perfect. It's not always easy. But she's figured out how to get the most out of the life she's been given. As a mom, the book resonated with me. Motherhood is not easy and no matter what your particular circumstances, we all face the same challenges. But the book transcends motherhood and addresses the struggles we face as women to follow our hearts. Carrie is a mother and an adventurer, and this book illustrates how she's managed to be both. I gave copies of this book to several girlfriends AND to my mother because I believe all women (and men) will find inspiration here for chasing their dreams.

Rachel says

Full disclosure: I know Carrie personally, and that's how I got an advance copy of this book. But I don't know her THAT well (we met at a writing retreat about a year ago), so it says a lot that I'd take the time to write a review here. I was nervous picking the book up, hoping I'd like it. Luckily, I loved it.

Her descriptions of the early days of motherhood were gripping and poignant. I kept rooting for her to succeed, and laughing along with her at her failures. As an adventurous woman pondering myself whether to have kids, this is exactly the kind of inside look at those emotional struggles that I was looking for. I've wanted to hand it to at least half a dozen friends since I finished it last month.

Wisconsin Alumni says

Carrie Visintainer '96

Author

From the author:

When Carrie Visintainer became a mother at the age of 32, she worried it was all over, that her adventurous life was done. World travel? Adios. Solo explorations in the mountains? Ciao. Creative outlets? She wondered, Are diapers my new white canvas? Immersed in a whirlwind of sleeplessness and spit-up, she was madly in love with her new baby, yet also felt her adventurous spirit and core identity crumbling.

So she laced up her boots and set out on a soul-searching journey, with revelations near and far. Inside a local Walmart, she realized that new motherhood is like traveling to a foreign country, with a new vocabulary, unknowable customs and extreme jetlag. Lying in a yurt in the Colorado forest, she came to terms with her postpartum depression. While sailing on a gulet off the coast of Turkey, she examined feelings of guilt about leaving her child in pursuit of adventure. And then, while perched in a handsome

stranger's motorcycle sidecar in the Mexican jungle, she found herself face-to-face with her central quandary: Domesticity vs. Wanderlust. Finally she discovered she could—and should—have both.

Laura Resau says

Love this book! This is my new go-to baby shower gift, which every expectant-mother friend of mine will be getting from this day forward! I know SO many women who fear that their identity as adventurer, artist, writer, traveler, (or fill-in-the-blank) will be threatened by becoming a mother.... and this is a very valid fear. Quite often, we see women giving up their unique, creative identities once their kids are born, unfortunately.

But as Carrie Visintainer shows us in her inspiring memoir, there can be another way! Women can creatively pursue their passions while being loving mothers. Carrie shares her own journey to this realization in the beautifully written **WILD MAMA**. She is our sensitive, honest, witty, and bold guide into this groundbreaking territory. She shares with us her own vulnerabilities and triumphs in a relatable, engaging, and moving narrative... she makes us feel a sense of camaraderie, a sense of determination that we, too, can design our lives in a way that honors our own passions. Highly recommended!

Nikko Lee says

Why I read this book:

I won a copy of Carrie Visintainer's first novel *Wild Mama* through the Tales of Mountain Mama's blog. Her blog is my go to for gear and activity suggestions for enjoying the outdoors with small children.

My one sentence summary:

Motherhood is about embracing change without giving up who you are.

Kudos:

My own transition to motherhood at the age of 37 was one of the more traumatic experiences of my life. Although I don't share Visintainer's wanderlust, I can relate to her need to preserve those individual qualities that make us who we are before baby. I found reassurance in her struggles to redefine herself post-baby. I enjoyed reading about her solo adventures and the push-pull of motherhood against individuality.

Quibbles:

My only quibble is that the sections jump in time, which was disorientating. The chapters felt more like a collection of essays rather than a cohesive work.

Final verdict:

High recommend to any outdoors mama's who need a pep talk on the value and importance of finding a way to hold on to what makes them a person. As Visintainer says, being kids respect their parents for being individuals.
