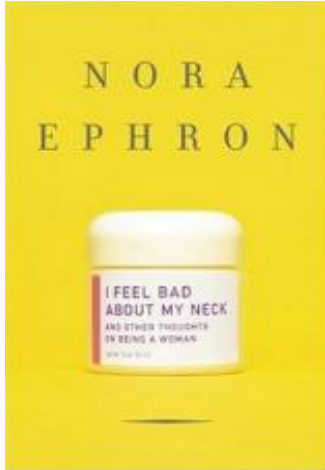


I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman

by Nora Ephron



About the Book

With her disarming, intimate, completely accessible voice, and dry sense of humor, Nora Ephron shares with us her ups and downs in **I Feel Bad About My Neck**, a candid, hilarious look at women who are getting older and dealing with the tribulations of maintenance, menopause, empty nests, and life itself.

Discussion Guide

For our first-ever Interactive Book Discussion Guide we asked our readers to supply discussion questions for a book. Thus questions 1-3 below are from the publisher and the rest of the guide has our readers' suggested questions along with the names of the participating groups to whom they are credited.

1. In, "What I Wish I'd Known," Nora Ephron lists things that she wishes She had known when she was younger. Were there any entries that were particularly resonant for you? Which ones, and why? Is there anything that Nora left off that you would like to add? Would your list look similar to hers?
2. Many of Nora's essays deal with food, and, in fact, she describes her forays into culinary cooking as a "love affair." Why do you think she uses this phrase? Food is particularly connected with memory in Nora's view. Does food trigger memories for you? What kind?
3. Nora's essays are filled with humorous anecdotes regarding "maintenance." However, there's an edge to this humor. What comment do you think that Nora is making about the place of "women of a certain age" in society? Discuss.
4. Nora Ephron seems to imply that one should approach the "maintenance" of aging with some degree of acceptance of the inevitable - even humor. Why do you think the majority of women in this society feel it is psychologically more

difficult to age "gracefully" than, say, women of 50 years ago?

--- *Sandra Bray of the Sister's Bookclub About their Club: Sister's Bookclub (we're not all sisters, but 4 members are) all are approaching or already at the crucial stage in our lives where we have to worry about adopting Katharine Hepburn's turtleneck cover-up ploy for wrinkled neck and jowls, or Diane Keaton's gloved hands for age spots.*

5. Do you intend to have any "nip/tuck" work done? If so, why? If you have had work done, why did you do it, and did you achieve the results that you wanted? --- *Lois Hobart from the book club, Estrogen on Estes, in Chicago.*

The following questions are from Susie Fintz from the Women of CBE Book Club that she used during their discussion.

6. What unusual item do you carry in your purse and why? How often do you change your purse and why?

7. What is your favorite cookbook and why?

8. Are you high maintenance or low maintenance (ie hair, nails, unwanted hair, exercise, skin)

9. Have you ever been too vain to wear glasses? If yes, has your vanity caused you any problems?

10. Do you think your children were born with their personalities or were they a product of their environments?

11. Would you have been in love with the Anthrop like Nora was? Have you ever been so drawn to a house/apartment that you over paid (either purchased or rented)?

12. What would be on your list of where you live? (i.e. Nora's list is 1. NYC 2. Apartment 3. Neighborhood 4. At her desk 5. In the kitchen)

13. Is there any food (like cabbage strudel) that you love that has disappeared?

14. What do you wish you had known earlier in life?

15. What 'life questions' do you have? (Some of Nora's are: "Should you live every day as if it's your last or should you save money on the chance you'll live twenty more years?", " Is life too short or is it going to be too long?" and "Should you work as hard as you can or should you slow down to smell the roses?")

Author Bio

Nora Ephron was the author of the bestselling I FEEL BAD ABOUT MY NECK, as well as HEARTBURN, CRAZY SALAD, WALLFLOWER AT THE ORGY and SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE. She wrote and directed the hit movie *Julie & Julia* and received Academy Award nominations for Best Original Screenplay for *When Harry Met Sally*. . . , *Silkwood*, and *Sleepless in Seattle*, which she also directed. Her other credits include the script for the stage hit *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* with Delia Ephron. She died in 2012.

Critical Praise

“Delightful . . . [A] funny, sisterly collection . . . Where books written for seniors are apt to be full of unconvincing cheer, Ephron’s charming book of self-questioning, confession, and resolve faces the reality that she’s sixty-five, dyes her hair, and is not happy about her neck, her purse, her failure at ambitious exercise programs, and other personal failures shared by many of us . . . None of these confrontations with mortality is arcane, all are universal, and people of either sex can relate to them . . . Many readers of *I Feel Bad About My Neck* will be familiar already with Ephron the accomplished human being . . . She’s one of only a few American essayists with a public persona—one thinks of Will Rogers, or Calvin Trillin, maybe Benjamin Franklin, Steve Martin, and Woody Allen . . . [She has] a talent for incisive compression and accessibility confided in a sort of plainspoken Will Rogers manner . . . The hapless character Ephron has presented over the years may be the real Ephron, or not. The actual Ephron is praised by friends as smart, a perfect housekeeper, much prettier than the person she began depicting in *Wallflower at the Orgy*, her essays from the Seventies, a wonderful cook, etc., etc. It’s sound rhetorical strategy. Of all the ways to be funny, self-deprecation is more endearing than satire . . . All in all, this funny book offers the pleasures of recognition; in an anxious world, her epigrams have a serious, consoling utility.”

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