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Brandt's "Parenting forward: How to raise children with justice, mercy, and kindness" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Brandt, C. (2019). *Parenting forward: How to raise children with justice, mercy, and kindness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 169 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 9780802876034

Parenting Forward is the first book published by Cindy Wang Brandt. Brandt is a popular blogger and considered the founder of the Unfundamentalist Parenting movement. In her recently published book, Brandt proposes a parenting philosophy which embraces a non-authoritarian, progressive style and encourages children to develop their own views.

Brandt, who describes herself as a progressive Christian whose faith is shifting, explores her views and parenting philosophy in the introduction. She frequently mentions growing up in a conservative evangelical theological tradition and a traditional parenting style and how her theological views have now shifted and impacted her parenting philosophy. After describing how her views were formed, Brandt goes on to explore how parents should provide children physical, emotional, and spiritual autonomy. She provides examples of how some prior commonly held parenting philosophies and those who are currently espoused such as first time obedience do not allow children to develop their own thoughts and beliefs or provide opportunity for children to learn to express themselves. Brandt primarily emphasizes that unless parents treat their children with justice and mercy, those children will not grow up to treat others with these traits. After laying this groundwork, Brandt moves on to exploring how to parent in ways that promote social justice issues. A description of the current status of each issue is followed by suggestions of practical parenting tips related to the issue. Throughout these chapters, Brandt continues to reference her conservative Christian upbringing and what she now believes to be inconsistencies in that belief and practice.

Parenting Forward is a popular level book designed for parents rather than the academy. Throughout this book, Brandt includes some references, but many are blog posts and newspaper articles. The bulk of the book relies on Brandt's own experiences and ideas. *Parenting Forward* is recommended with reservation. Readers who embrace Brandt's description of progressive Christianity will appreciate her parenting philosophy. Other readers will find many ideas to consider implementing

and will be encouraged to examine their own parenting philosophy at the same time they are apprehensive concerning some of Brandt's theological viewpoints. Public libraries and other libraries who have large parenting and family collections will wish to purchase this title.

Reviewer

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