

In Search of Fatherhood

Fifty women from around the world share what daughters need from dads

PORTLAND, OR – You’re a man—but where do you learn to be a father? From women. Yes, women. At least if you’re raising daughters, reasoned local author Kevin Renner.

Renner found himself at mid-life with more questions than answers while parenting two pre-teen daughters. So he spent a year interviewing 50 women from around the world and across seven decades to learn the many ways in which their fathers—good, bad, and in-between—had affected their lives.

Homeless women, the unemployed, and sex workers. A state supreme court justice, executives, and world class athletes. Straight, lesbian, and transgender. These women shared their life stories, their broken hearts, and their gratitude in what has become a fresh and compelling look at fathers and daughters.

In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom from the World of Daughterhood brings together their stories...and his.

“The big lesson from these very intimate conversations is how the universal love story between fathers and daughters plays out,” Renner says. “Some daughters draw the long straw in their fathers, getting men who provide affection, attention, and discipline. Some draw the short straw, with fathers who abandon or abuse them. And some draw the long-and-the-short-of-it, with fathers who may be physically present but emotionally absent.”

Among the short straw stories is that of Katie, whose father had been abusing her from an early age. When Renner met up with her decades later, she was living in a fog of drug addiction and alcohol abuse, and had given up her children. She hit rock-bottom while working as a stripper, churning through five marriages, and attempting suicide three times.

Blanca, on the other hand, drew a long straw in the father she got. He brought his family from Mexico to the U.S. to educate his daughters while he worked as a field laborer and landscaper. Blanca honored his sacrifice by completing a law degree at Santa Clara University and an MBA at Berkeley. She now works as honorary U.S. consul to Mexico.

In Search of Fatherhood includes two-dozen other stories, among them:

- Wendy, who loved her single father so dearly she proposed to him at age four.
- Kim, who is transgender and spent her childhood imprisoned in a boy’s body, became best friends with her father in adulthood.
- Kara, a member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic team, whose father was killed by a drunk driver a week before she turned four.
- Courtney, whose father sexually abused her until age 12, when she turned his German Luger on him.
- Luna, a former drug addict, who earns her living as a sex worker raising a daughter and attending college so she can work as a nutritionist.

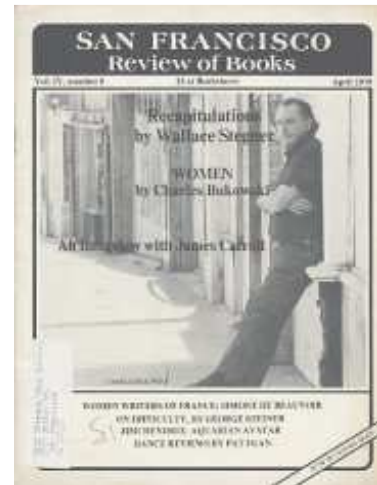
Renner speaks to audiences and blogs on the lessons he’s learned for fathers and daughters at Kevin-renner.com. *In Search of Fatherhood* has been featured on dozens of nationally syndicated and major market programs around the country, including NPR, CBS, FOX, NBC and ABC Television and radio affiliates, as well as The Oprah Winfrey Radio Network, WGN Chicago, and Charter Local Edition / CNN Headline News.

In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom from the World of Daughterhood

San Francisco Review of Books

By Kevin Renner
Inkwater Press, \$19.95, 224 pages

Kevin Renner, the father of two girls, woke up one day and wondered what he was teaching his daughters through his words and actions. He realized that the time he spent with them and away from them would affect the types of women they would become. He simply worked and lived without thinking of his role as a father to daughters.

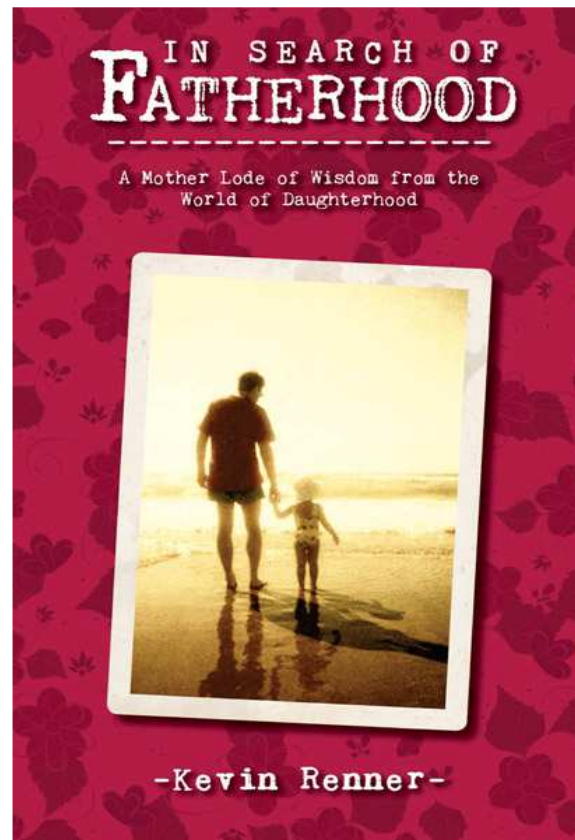


In the excellent *In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom from the World of Daughterhood*, Renner interviews adult women about their relationships with their fathers.

Renner wants to know how these father-daughter relationships affect a girl's development and her choices throughout her life. Renner hopes his book will help readers to learn what is good in their own relationships and what they can improve. Told in the women's own words, these haunting and captivating interviews make this book difficult to put down.

Renner offers his readers stories of fathers who were positive influences in their daughters' lives, fathers who were both good and bad at parenting, and fathers who were absent, abusive, or harmful.

These interviews are both heartwarming and heartbreaking, and readers can easily see themselves reflected in these women's lives, making this book valuable for both fathers and daughters.



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If you read one book about fathers and daughters, read this one.

Betsy I. Davenport, Ph.D.

Paraphrasing Esther Perel (*Mating in Captivity*) who has said: "Tell me how you were loved, and I'll tell you how you make love," reading Kevin Renner's memoir of fatherhood prompts me to say to women, regardless of age, culture, or background: "Tell me if and how your father loved you as a child, and I'll tell you whether or not you have found love as a woman."

Charlene Kate Kavanagh, Ph.D., psychologist and author

Kevin Renner has written a modern-day book of wisdom revealed through the stories daughters tell of their fathers. He shares unique and privileged insights into not only what it means to be a father, but what it means to be human. As myself a father of two daughters and as a priest, this is the book I would place in the hands of a new father who seeks to understand the powerful and indelible bond which is created with the birth of a daughter. No reader will finish this book either unmoved or unchanged.

The Rev. Stephen V. Schneider

This is not a book you "can't put down." You will need and will want to put it down -- to ponder and let the lessons sink in. You will need to catch your breath and appreciate the pure joy in the stories of wonderful father/daughter relationships as well as to marvel at the daughters who triumphed in the face of horrific relationships with their fathers. It is clear that writing this book changed the author's life. There is a good chance it will do the same for its readers.

Kenton R. Hill, Ed.D., author of "Smart Isn't Enough: How Developing Your Emotional Intelligence Can Transform Your Life and Career"

The interviews are often touching in their emotional rawness and the crystalline clarity with which many women – decades removed from their childhood – recall poignant moments with their fathers. As the book makes clear, it's the small, special moments in daily life, rather than the grand, dramatic gestures, that seem to stick.

James Broderick, PhD, New Jersey City University

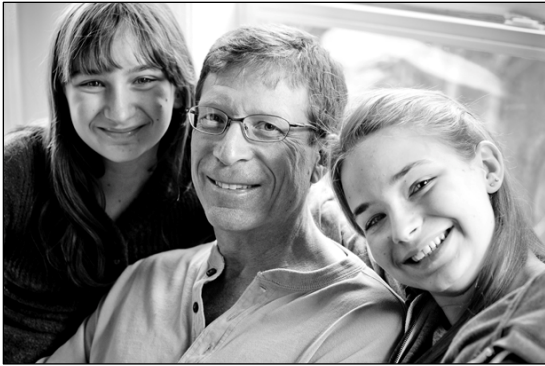
There's no playbook for fathers who are raising daughters. Kevin Renner has written one.

Steve Sanders, WGN TV, Chicago

Women, buy a copy of this book for every man you love.

Kerry McClenahan, CEO, McClenahan Bruer Communications

About Kevin Renner, author of *In Search of Fatherhood*



Marketing executive Kevin Renner woke up one day, and realizing it was Monday and that he had to go to work, he blurted out while still half asleep, “Oh, f_@%*!”

Three months later, he was done as a global marketing executive for a large technology company.

That literal wake-up call didn’t end with a career change. He realized that he didn’t know his daughters very well, and at ages nine and thirteen, they would be

off to college, and to their own lives within a few short years.

Renner asked himself, “What does a good father look like? What do I have left to teach my daughters in the short time that remains? And what will they long for in adulthood that they haven’t gotten from me in their youth?” When no good answers came to mind, he decided to learn about fatherhood from the vantage point of daughters; he interviewed fifty women from around the world and across seven decades for *In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom from the World of Daughterhood*.

The women were young and old, growing up during The Great Depression, World War II, Vietnam, Watergate, and into the 1990s. They were rich and poor, successful and marginalized—among them a state supreme court justice, a doctor, a psychotherapist, professional athletes, and former executives, as well as a sex worker, former drug addicts, the unemployed, and a woman who had been homeless. They were straight, lesbian, and transgender. They were from Iran, Liberia, China, the U.S., Mexico, Germany, Korea, Saudi Arabia, India, and places in between.

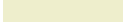
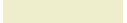
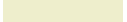
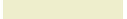
His book is the first step toward his goal of having a lasting influence around the world on fathers, daughters, and their relationships. His work has taken him to appear on The Oprah Winfrey Radio Network, WGN, NPR, CBS, FOX, NBC and ABC TV & radio affiliates throughout North America.

A former journalist, Kevin holds an undergraduate degree in social sciences with honors from the University of California at Santa Cruz and an MBA from the University of California at Berkeley. He also has been a Davenport Fellow in business journalism at the University of Missouri, and attended the executive marketing program at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. He is founder and president of B2B Market Strategies, a strategic growth advisory firm serving emerging B2B companies in technology and health care.

Kevin blogs at www.kevin-renner.com. Follow him on Facebook at *Kevin Renner, In Search of Fatherhood*, on Twitter @KevinRenner, and on YouTube (Kevin Renner).

Customer Reviews

[In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of Daughterhood](#)

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By

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This review is from: [In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of Daughterhood \(Paperback\)](#)

What a great book! The stories are really interesting--not just the women's stories, but the author's story about how he changed as a father. There's also lots of good advice for how to really be with your daughters. I downloaded this to my Kindle and couldn't put it down. It reminded me so much of my own father. During my teen years, I didn't appreciate his caring ways until years later -- like telling me to be home at a certain time and then coming home on time and finding him asleep in my bed. I woke him up and he looked at his watch and then went to his own bedroom. I am going to buy copies of this book for my son-in-law (the father of my granddaughter) and my son who is a family counselor.

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5.0 out of 5 stars **Thought Provoking**, June 17, 2011

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This review is from: [In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of Daughterhood \(Paperback\)](#)

This book will take you back to your own childhood and allow you to be a little more objective about your own father. The stories cover the gamut--sweet, funny and tragic. I was amazed at some of the stories and the author's ability to get the women to open up. I also loved his thoughts at the end of the chapters. Great book!

5.0 out of 5 stars **Beautiful read**, June 14, 2011

By [Morgan Day](#) (U.S.A) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: [In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of](#)

Daughterhood (Paperback)

For any man who has ever doubted the strength of the impact he can have on his daughter's life, and for any woman who is searching to uncover the story of her father inside of her.

5.0 out of 5 stars **An excellent pick for anyone who also wonders what is the role of fatherhood**, July 12, 2011

By [Midwest Book Review](#) (Oregon, WI USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: **In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of Daughterhood (Paperback)**

What is the role of the father? It is a question that has been driving men mad for centuries. "In Search of Fatherhood" is a collection of interviews from Kevin Renner as he sought fifty adult women from around the world in order to get an understanding of how the father is in our lives, be it for better, worse, and everything in between. Drawing on both their stories and his own recollections of fatherhood as a son and a father, "In Search of Fatherhood" is an excellent pick for anyone who also wonders what is the role of fatherhood.

5.0 out of 5 stars **Worthwhile reading**, June 27, 2011

By [George Scarlatta](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase ([What's this?](#))

This review is from: **In Search of Fatherhood: A Mother Lode of Wisdom From the World of Daughterhood (Paperback)**

Well written and worthwhile reading for both Fathers and Mothers, of small children. One can only benefit from the accounts set forth in this book.

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