



Otherhood

Melanie Notkin

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Melanie Notkin wants to change our perceptions about childless women. The rise of childless women is one of the most overlooked and under-appreciated social issues of our time. Never previously have more women lived longer before having their first child or remained childless toward the end of their fertility. In the U.S., the level of childlessness of women age forty to forty-four has doubled, from 10 percent in 1976 to 20 percent in 2006. Society assumes that women either are mothers or choose not to be mothers, but waiting for love and marriage—or at least a committed union— before embarking on motherhood seems to be the least acceptable life choice for the modern woman. Nearly half of North American women of childbearing age are childless, a steep rise from 35 percent in 1976. Nevertheless, childless women are perceived as the exception, not the norm.

In *Otherhood* , Melanie Notkin explores this modern phenomenon to understand the reasons for this shift, the social and emotional impact of childlessness, and how this “new normal” will impact social structures in the decades to come. Part anecdotal storytelling, part inspirational, part reportage, and part manifesto, *Otherhood* sets out to get to the heart of the issues, enliven the societal consciousness, and trigger conversation. Notkin offers a very personal take on a trend that affects so many modern women.

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