



# Momma Zen: Walking the Crooked Path of Motherhood

By Karen Maezen Miller

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**Momma Zen: Walking the Crooked Path of Motherhood** By Karen Maezen Miller

Combining humor, honesty, and plainspoken advice, *Momma Zen* distills the doubts and frustrations of parenting into vignettes of Zen wisdom.

Drawing on her experience as a first-time mother, and on her years of Zen meditation and study, Miller explores how the daily challenges of parenthood can become the most profound spiritual journey of our lives.

This compelling and wise memoir follows the timeline of early motherhood from pregnancy through toddlerhood. *Momma Zen* takes readers on a transformative journey, charting a mother's growth beyond naive expectations and disorientation to finding fulfillment in ordinary tasks, developing greater self-awareness and acceptance—to the gradual discovery of “maternal bliss,” a state of abiding happiness and ease that is available to us all.

In her gentle and reassuring voice, Karen Miller convinces us that ancient and authentic spiritual lessons can be as familiar as a lullaby, as ordinary as pureed peas, and as frequent as a sleepless night. She offers encouragement for the hard days, consolation for the long haul, and the lightheartedness every new mom needs to face the crooked path of motherhood straight on.

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## Momma Zen: Walking the Crooked Path of Motherhood By Karen Maezen Miller Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

A former student of the late California-based Zen master Taizan Maezumi Roshi, Miller spent years working on this book, which distills years of Zen practice in the crucible of her experiences parenting her daughter. From the beginning, Miller is very frank about feeling overwhelmed, jealous of her husband's love for their newborn, and her periods of depression. The path from these feelings to the realization that "your life is not yours at all" but "an unbroken line of love" to others in one's family and in one's life-and to maintaining that awareness through all of the changes of parenting-comprises the rest of the book. Short chapters on having "No Expectation" (which begins with Miller's difficulty conceiving for the first time at 42 and ends with her preeclampsia), on "Being Unprepared" (labor is induced early, and Georgia Grace is born healthy), on the power of lullabies as a kind of meditation, on learning from small failures (and from the difficulties of breast feeding), on sleep and sleeplessness, and on the paradoxical freedom of parenting's "No Exit" center unfold into something more than aphorism. Wrestling oneself free from the need for control is, as Miller describes it, a constant struggle (or, in Zen parlance, a practice). This book realizes it with warmth, engagement and winning honesty.

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### **Review**

"Here at last is what we mothers have been waiting for: momma-hood held in equal respect to monk-hood."—*Shambhala Sun*

"Wrestling oneself free from the need for control is a constant struggle. This book realizes it with warmth, engagement, and winning honesty."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Eloquently frames the everyday experiences of parenting as opportunities for spiritual growth."—*Mothering*

"Miller has written a powerful synthesis of the insights she has attained, both through the experience of motherhood and as a Zen Buddhist priest."—*Literary Mama*

"Miller's book offers guidance, insight, and wisdom. She shows us how to embrace not only the ups and downs of our own mothering, but also helps us open our heart to those who have mothered us. I recommend her book to anyone who wants to really learn something about spiritual practice in everyday life."—Diane Eshin Rizzetto, author of *Waking Up to What You Do: A Zen Practice for Meeting Every Situation with Intelligence and Compassion*

"Miller's practice has seeped deeply into her life and the result is an extraordinary book of practical wisdom. She avoids the preaching and moralizing so common in parenting books, and instead offers the reader a way of peace and freedom in the midst of fatigue and doubt. A truly valuable book."—William Martin, author of *The Parent's Tao Te Ching*

"*Momma Zen*, filled with honest tales of the bedlam of motherhood, beckons us to an oasis of silence and acceptance. Miller deftly leads us to the realization that, rather than searching outwardly, this oasis can be located in the center of the life we are living right now."—Vivian Glyck, author of *The Tao of Poop*

"Honest, revealing, funny, and poignantly accurate, *Momma Zen* unfolds the powerful path of raising a child, as well as the opportunities for deeper spiritual understanding. An important contribution."—Nicolee Jikyo McMahon Roshi, Three Treasures Zen Community, San Diego

#### About the Author

Karen Maezen Miller is a mother, wife, writer, and a Zen teacher (dharma holder) in the lineage of the legendary Zen master Taizan Maezumi Roshi. A journalist by training, the author had a twenty-year career as the owner of a marketing and public relations agency. Today she freelances as a business communications consultant, speechwriter, speech trainer, web copywriter, and ghostwriter.

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