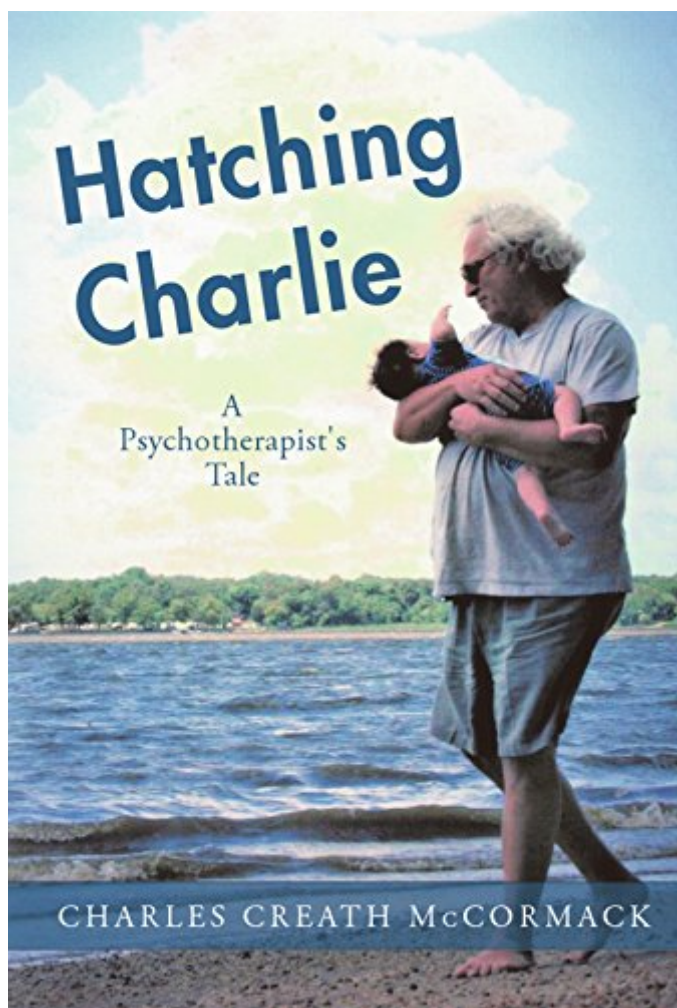


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Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale



Synopsis

Hatching Charlie is the odyssey of psychotherapist Charles McCormack that begins in episodic violence and the segregationist South then moves to a boarding school in France where he is abandoned. Unable to speak the language Charlie is isolated and bullied. Without the love and protection of family or friends, he becomes anxious and depressed. He begins a desperate quest to make sense of a world that has gone mad and of the relationships that allowed it to happen, a drive for understanding that will shape the rest of his life. He wonders about things most people take for granted: love, loving, life, death, family, son-hood, spouse-hood, fatherhood and grand fatherhood. Charlie strives to understand "How to create a life worth living: a personally meaningful life?" The going is not easy. Charlie encounters many failures in his life before discovering his calling. Then, while working blue-collar jobs to support his family he obtains degrees in psychology and social work. Then, as a therapist, he suffers PTSD following a patient's suicide, begins writing, is published, and invited to join the faculty of a prestigious psychoanalytically oriented training institute. Subsequently, he is named Clinical Social Worker of the Year in Maryland and promoted to Senior Social Worker of Adult Long-Term Inpatient Services at a renowned psychiatric hospital. Finally, he writes a book entitled "Treating Borderline States in Marriage: Dealing with Oppositionalism, Ruthless Aggression, and Severe Resistance". Yet, as his career trajectory rises his personal life plummets. He is confronted by mental illness in his own family, becomes a single-parent father and divorces, all the while continuing to struggle to answer those early questions. Now, armed by decades of thinking, training, and helping others Charlie confronts the impact of his childhood traumas on his personal capacity for love and loving, and of creating a personally meaningful life. As you read "Hatching Charlie" you'll find aspects of your own journey in his and his answers will surprise yet resonate. What people are saying: ... "Exceptionally well written, organized and presented, "Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale" is an inherently fascinating, thoughtful, and thought-provoking read from beginning to end. While unreservedly recommended for both community and academic library Contemporary American Biography collections, "Hatching Charlie" will also prove to be of immense interest to the supplemental studies reading lists of psychology students as well." Midwest Book Review ... "You'll read your story in this beautiful book. Then you'll wake up, determined to embrace life, your life, broken as it is, and to make some meaning out of the broken pieces." Reader's Favorite... "...compelling. If I'd had more time, I'd probably have read it in one sitting...the book truly covers the full gamut of human experience - warmth, love, friendship, loneliness, unhappiness, violence, despair: life and death." Literary Titan... "Socrates famously said that the unexamined life is not worth living. By reading about how

others, such as McCormack, have examined their lives, perhaps this task is made a little easier for the rest of us." Portland Book Review.â | It was amazing. Intriguing, Powerful, Insightful, Compelling, Fantastic Read! I Loved It!" Goodreads Review.â | "I purchased it in audio formats and I have listened to it twice. It is insightful and well written... I found it inspirational!" Facebook Comment.â |

â œHatching Charlieâ • brought me to the edge of the storm. My congratulations and love to Charles McCormack for his perseverance, tenacity and fine, fine authentic work. What a weighted puzzle, what a multi-headed monster, an endless confronting and grappling, which he tells us all about in such fabulously clear and uncompromised language.â • Goodreads Reviewâ | A 2017 11th Annual National Indie Excellence Book Awards Finalist.

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Customer Reviews

From the onset, this book is emotionally charged as it draws one into Charlie's chaotic childhood to the depths of his loneliness and despair. The words are vibrant in content so much so to allow the reader to visualise the sights and sounds of that childhood, while simultaneously feeling the anguish, fear, uncertainty and desperation. As you loathe his parents, silently measure them to your own with their shortcomings and/or strengths. Charlie's tale continues through teen years and early

adulthood -- a flawed but intriguing man emerges, though still "unhatched", full of wit, whimsy and occasional wisdom, taking what may be perceived as risks, and learning from the insights of strangers and friendships. Years pass... providing Charlie opportunities and challenges in his work, relationships, life itself. As the book comes to its close, we know we have joined Charlie on his journey--but have learned just as much about who we are too. And though our experiences are vastly different, in the end, a common core of family, enjoying nature, time for self, and reflection, make all of our worlds more alike than not.

Charles Creath McCormack's book *Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale* is quite a book: a frank autobiography centered around the theme of the pursuit of happiness and a meaningful life, from a man who has sat both on and beside the psychotherapy couch; or as the author himself describes it, "a story of the follies and wisdom of the human condition". Mr. McCormack is fully aware of both the theories and the realities of mental health, although the book contains no technical language at all. It's an accessible account covering every stage of his life, from his youngest years into his partial retirement. Not to give too much away, but as the imagery of the title implies, his tale starts in darkness, and concludes with a breakthrough, with all the usual human drama of a life lived fully. I found the style of writing very interesting; it perhaps relates to his experience as a psychotherapist. He makes use of imagery, not frequently, but when he does it's usually a long, in-depth passage. Thankfully they don't feel convoluted, because they exemplify his points well. The imagery adds well to the overall narrative, which is compelling. If I'd had more time, I'd probably have read it in one sitting. Although the author references forward and back to events distant by dozens of years and pages, I was never left feeling confused or lost, so it was neatly accomplished. There was a clear sense of reflection as to what the reader may be thinking, and at points it almost felt like I was part of a conversation. However, I thought that near the end the narrative became a little unfocused, with some unnecessary repetition and description of his family that doesn't always feel directly related to his main subject "his state of mind." I want to describe it as a generous story, because I was given extremely honest details about Mr. McCormack's life that many would have found embarrassing to tell. But he hides no faults or uncomfortable thoughts, and constantly admits when he was wrong. In one chapter the author relates the unfortunate stories of some of his patients. In this way, the book truly covers the full gamut of human experience "warmth, love, friendship, loneliness, unhappiness, violence, despair: life and death." Despite the author's wishes that we might take responsibility for our happiness, his book is not a manual for how to

obtain it. Observant readers might pluck helpful wisdom from its pages, but this isn't written as advice. "Just as he says he does with his patients, he places no obligation on us to try it. Overall, I would recommend this to any adult reader who is willing to confront life's uncomfortable truths and those who enjoy a fly-on-the-wall tale of other's joys and sorrows. I enjoyed trip.

While with these words, the poet Rilke rejected psychoanalysis, Charles McCormack does the opposite. In his memoir, *Hatching Charlie: A Psychotherapist's Tale*, the author, from an insight-oriented perspective, with skill and nuance, demonstrates how his angels and his devils are inextricably interwoven. Throughout this deeply resonating work, the author demonstrates with sensitivity and wit, and without jargon, his own life journey and the painful process of disentangling his own devils and angels and ultimately accepting that both exist. Through his own experiences, he discovers at a meaningful level that he himself has the ultimate choice and responsibility for his own happiness. Only someone who has traveled this road himself and participated in the journey with others along the road, could tell this story of the universal human condition.

Hatching Charlie could very well be less concisely titled *Finding and Living a Good Life*. What Charles McCormack has done is laid bare his soul in a way that connects reader to him, and more importantly, him to himself. In a fabulous retrospective of his younger years, you can see how every moment from birth through marriage clearly drove him to the profession he loves, psychotherapy. And it is within this milieu that he shines as not only a therapist but as a down-to-earth human being. Plenty of stories highlight the ups and downs of his personal and professional lives, and how each impacts the other. Each vignette melds with the next to give us a more complete picture of what may seem like a fragmented life. But I'm reminded of Norman Lear's adage, that we all live many different lives in many different eras; as McCormack has entered new phases, he does his best to improve in each life. Through it all, he reminds us that we are also humans, living our own narratives amongst the millions of others around us. McCormack's review of how he learned (and honestly continues to learn!) to choose happiness over dread, contentedness over ostentatious thrills, peace over the demons of his youth, is a lesson to all of us. Every time he relates a story of discovering something new about himself is also a connection, a calling, to each of us to do the same. As he has opted to quell the impulsiveness in himself for a quieter happiness, he urges us to do the same. And as his mother urged, the take-home message is clear: *"Have a good life."*

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