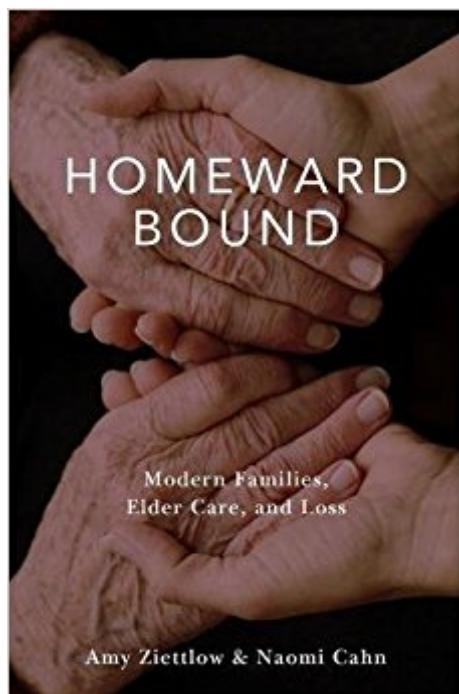


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# Homeward Bound: Modern Families, Elder Care, And Loss



## **Synopsis**

Homeward Bound shows that as family structure becomes more complex, so too does elder care, and existing institutions and legal approaches are not prepared to handle those complexities. As 79 million American Baby Boomers approach old age, their diverse family structures mean the burden of care will fall on a different cast of family members than in the past. Our current approaches are based on an outdated caregiving model that presumes life-long connection between the parents and offspring, with the existence of high internal norm cohesion among family members providing a valuable safety net for caregiving. Single parent and remarried parent-led families are far more complicated, fragile, and point to the need for increased formal support from the religious, medical, legal, and public policy communities. We base our analysis on in-depth, qualitative interviews with surviving grown children and stepchildren whose mother, father, stepparent, or ex-stepparent died. Their stories illustrate the profound ways that the caregiving, mourning, and inheritance process has changed in ways not adequately reflected in formal legal, medical, and religious tools. The solutions center on awareness and preparation: providing more support for individual planning for incapacity and death and, even more importantly, creating legal, political, and social planning for the "graying of America" at a time of increasingly complex familial ties.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Amy Zietlow is Affiliate Scholar at the Institute for American Values and a frequent contributor to The Atlantic and Huffington Post. Naomi Cahn is Harold H. Greene Professor of Law, George Washington University, and co-author of *Red Families v. Blue Families* and *Marriage Markets* (both

with Oxford University Press).

Fantastic writing.

I just pre-ordered my copy of Homeward Bound! For over a decade, I've been reading Amy Zietlow's published works and following posts on the Atlantic and Huffington Post. She is incredibly thoughtful as she poses challenging issues for today's families about caregiving, eldercare and cultural norms about death and dying. I have always found her reflections to be instructional, salient and witty. And I know that her book co-written with Naomi Cahn will not disappoint!

Homeward Bound: Modern Families, Elder Care, and Loss by Zietlow and Cahn is a valuable reference book for today. Through extensive research on those experiencing their elder's death, Zietlow and Cahn share how family's with varying familial structures overcame difficulties to assist a loved one's end of life journey. Read this book and understand the importance of advanced planning, experience the societal need for more caregiver support, and find tools to assist those who are mourning. A thorough bibliographic resource guide and annotated notes provide the reader with additional reference tools to understand elder care and loss.

I really think this is a valuable book with the changing dynamics of families. I work in healthcare and this book should be required reading for care workers. I made sure I got a living will after reading this. Chapter 6 is a tear jerker - so beware.

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