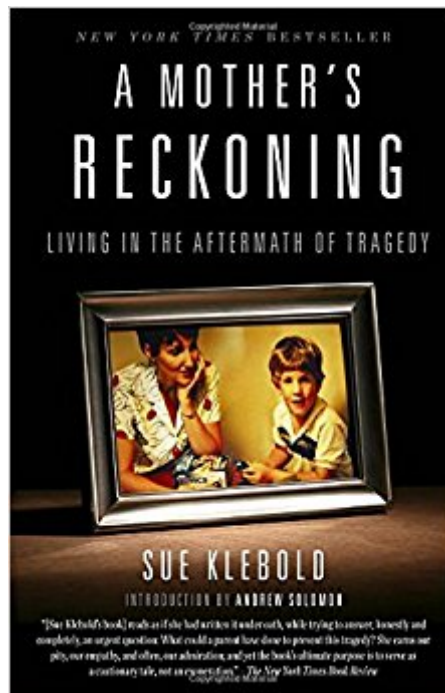




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# A Mother's Reckoning: Living In The Aftermath Of Tragedy



## Synopsis

The acclaimed New York Times bestseller by Sue Klebold, mother of one of the Columbine shooters, about living in the aftermath of Columbine. On April 20, 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold walked into Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Over the course of minutes, they would kill twelve students and a teacher and wound twenty-four others before taking their own lives. For the last sixteen years, Sue Klebold, Dylan's mother, has lived with the indescribable grief and shame of that day. How could her child, the promising young man she had loved and raised, be responsible for such horror? And how, as his mother, had she not known something was wrong? Were there subtle signs she had missed? What, if anything, could she have done differently? These are questions that Klebold has grappled with every day since the Columbine tragedy. In *A Mother's Reckoning*, she chronicles with unflinching honesty her journey as a mother trying to come to terms with the incomprehensible. In the hope that the insights and understanding she has gained may help other families recognize when a child is in distress, she tells her story in full, drawing upon her personal journals, the videos and writings that Dylan left behind, and on countless interviews with mental health experts. Filled with hard-won wisdom and compassion, *A Mother's Reckoning* is a powerful and haunting book that sheds light on one of the most pressing issues of our time. And with fresh wounds from the Newtown and Charleston shootings, never has the need for understanding been more urgent. All author profits from the book will be donated to research and to charitable organizations focusing on mental health issues. • Washington Post, Best Memoirs of 2016

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Unimaginably detailed, raw, minute-by-minute, illuminating, and just plain gripping. It’s also the most extraordinary testament—to honesty, love, pain, doubt, and resilience. This book is nothing less than a public service. I beseech you to read it.”

“As people read Sue’s memoir, what they will find is that her book is honest, and her pain genuine. Her story may be uncomfortable to read, but it will raise awareness about brain health and the importance of early identification and intervention to maintain it. If people listen to her or to all that she has experienced, and to how this has changed her or they will be quicker to respond to depression in young people, to the suicidal thinking that can accompany it, and to the rage that can build almost unnoticed in young people when the people who truly and completely love and care for them are distracted by other challenges in life.”

“Required reading for all parents of adolescents...soul-piercingly honest, written with bravery and intelligence... A book of nobility and importance.”

“Reading this book as a critic is hard; reading it as a parent is devastating. I imagine snippets of my own young children in Dylan Klebold, shades of my parenting in Sue and Tom. I suspect that many families will find their own parallels. This book’s insights are painful and necessary and its contradictions inevitable.”

“[Sue Klebold’s book] reads as if she had written it under oath, while trying to answer, honestly and completely, an urgent question: What could a parent have done to prevent this tragedy? She earns our pity, our empathy and, often, our admiration; and yet the book’s ultimate purpose is to serve as a cautionary tale, not an exoneration.”

“[T]he parenting book everyone should read.”

“I believe Sue Klebold. So will you.”

“At times her story is so chilling you want to turn away, but Klebold’s compassion and honesty and realization that parents and institutions must work to discover kids’ hidden suffering—will keep you riveted.”

“This book which can be tough to read in places is an important one. It helps us arrive at a new understanding of how Columbine happened and, in the process, may help avert other tragedies.”

Rated: A.

Sue Klebold is the mother of Dylan Klebold, one of the two shooters at Columbine High School in 1999 who killed 13 people before ending their own lives, a tragedy that saddened and

galvanized the nation. She has spent the last 15 years excavating every detail of her family life, and trying to understand the crucial intersection between mental health problems and violence. Instead of becoming paralyzed by her grief and remorse, she has become a passionate and effective agent working tirelessly to advance mental health awareness and intervention.

My mom used to get upset with me because I disregarded what was going on in the world, as far as news goes. Columbine was the first news story that gripped me to the point of obsession. I asked all the questions every other person was asking, and made assumptions I had no right to make. That changed when I read Susan's essay, *I Will Never Know Why*. It, to me, is the single most important essay ever written, and it changed me. Never, since reading that essay, have I ever blamed parents for their child's behavior, especially kids in their teen years. I've seen my own child act out in ways that she certainly didn't learn from her father and I, and I felt deception like I never felt it before. And stupid. I felt stupid that a teen could pull the wool over my eyes. Thanks to Susan, I learned years ago that it is foolish to think I know my child. I waited for this book to drop on my Kindle last night, and read it until I finished it. I did have to take breaks, because she is raw and honest, and as a mother, this is a welcomed relief, but also suffocating. I can only conclude that not only is this book a reflection of Susan's most personal thoughts, but a reflection of myself and all the mistakes I've made, and the signs I've overlooked as a parent. It's suffocating to realize my own failures, simply put. Every year, right after New Year's, I share Susan's essay on my FB page in hopes of enlightening others. Susan, I continue to send you strength, courage and clarity. Thank you for being you. From one mother to another, I give you permission to mourn your son. You can simultaneously have grief for all the victims and your son, because the heart can hold multiple emotions at once. I wish you well.

How does one begin to "rate" a review for a book based on this subject of gut-wrenching recent history? I put up Five Stars because of the candor, humility and deep-sorrow that is clearly evident and expressed in this harrowing account by the mother of one of the shooters; in a rampage that will be remembered as "Columbine" for many generations, as one of America's most tragic mass-shootings. This book is raw and emotional ... but tells the story from a perspective that few others, aside from a mother, could ever present. It held my attention from the first to last paragraph.

Without shame I admit that I don't normally read books like this. There is too much sadness in the world, and I do my very best to distance myself from it. But in cases like with this book, there is no

way I can turn away. The words fade out, and so does the world, and there is only the story. This book is so raw, so heartbreaking, and it is as I have just recently finished it for the second time (my first being when I wrote my first rendition of this review), my biggest hope is that its message reaches as many people as possible. I would recommend this book to anyone!

There aren't a lot of people who don't know about the terrible tragedy that was Columbine school shootings which happened in April 1999. If you're wondering if you are empathetic, all you need to do is pick up this book and read it, I guarantee you that by the end of it, you'll have gone through at least 6 boxes of tissues! It's truly and heart wrenching read. Sue, is Dylan Klebold's mother, and he is one of the shooters that killed 12 students and one teacher, and wounded as many as 25 others. She thought she knew her son, thought that all he needed was love and everything that 'good parenting' entails. However, she finds out in the worst way possible that there was a lot more going on with him than what she saw on the surface. How do you deal with something so horrific? Your son's suicide, and the fact that he was partly responsible for the murder and injuring of others? Sue really does a magnificent job of baring her soul, her thoughts, her failures, and her ignorance for the world to see. It was really eye opening to read what she had to go through, including the awful things from strangers that came from all around the world. People tend to forget that she, and her family, were victims as well. She paints us a picture of the son she thought she knew, and the painful path she walked when it was revealed who he really was. You just can't imagine. She does do a great job in sharing various information that she has learned about mental health (or brain health as she likes to call it), violence, and school shootings by interviewing various experts over the last 16 years. Things that sometimes people don't think about, or know about, or have been told a skewed or wrong information. However, there were times when it was very much biased information that she was sharing. I suppose that's only to be expected, and she does do a good job to try and avoid it. She shares a lot of information that is helpful for parents to know, and just people in general. I think the message to 'think before you speak/type/rant' is poignant in this book; not just about this tragedy, but to other like it. It's pretty easy to throw blame when you live in a black and white world. Some of us know that the world isn't black and white though, there's a lot of grey. And essentially, mental health can be grey at times, because of our individuality. Overall, this was a fantastic read. A real eye opener in that you get to experience some of what it's like for families who are involved in tragedies like this. Hopefully, you feel a little more empathy and compassion at the end of it, if you didn't already.

This book was eye opening. Most of the signs she feels she missed I think I would have missed too. Especially considering he was dismissed from his Diversion course only a few weeks before the massacre. I'm not one to jump to conclusions over bad moods. It's a scary thought as a mother...I admire her for putting this information out there. It couldn't have been easy. There are a couple reasons I didn't give this book 5 stars. First is that I found the beginning chapters a bit misleading. One example of this is at the beginning, where reader is lead to believe that Eric and Dylan weren't good friends and rarely hung out. Turns out they've been friends since middle school and hung out frequently. I thought maybe it was just me until my mom called and complained about the same thing while she was reading it. The second reason is the repetition in this book. I understand the message she is trying to get across but the same thing is repeated in every chapter! I felt like "I get it!" now give me some new content! I actually ended up not reading the last 2 chapters after the lack of any new information in the previous few.

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