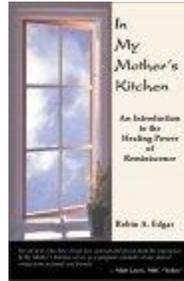


Book Reviews

In My Mother's Kitchen by Robin Edgar



reviewed by Judith Helburn

Edgar, Robin A. *In My Mother's Kitchen: an Introduction to the Healing Power of Reminiscence*. 2d ed. Tree House Enterprises, Charlotte, NC, 2003. ISBN 097237700X. Reviewed by Judith Helburn.

Robin Edgar's book is a comforting, charming memorial to the loving relationship she had with her mother. It could have been just that and still be an enjoyable read; however, Edgar takes the reader further by suggesting rituals to call up special times with a lost loved one and exercises to help one write family stories.

In My Mother's Kitchen can be read in a single sitting, yet it is worth returning and savoring the memories which Edgar's reminiscences trigger. She writes of her mother's disapproval of the young Edgar's experimenting with makeup. I immediately recalled my own father telling me to "wipe that lipstick off your face. You could paint the side of a barn." I imagine many women have a similar memory which is a great story to pass on to our daughters and granddaughters. Or don't they wear makeup anymore?

Edgar writes of her mother's illness when Edgar is fifteen and her mother's struggle for the next ten years. However, this is not a sad story. Instead, it is a celebration and a savoring. Each vignette within the four chapters: "Where to Begin: Follow Your Senses," "Keep the Memories Alive: Laughter Is Good Medicine," "Look for the Lesson: Hindsight is 20/20," "Treasure the Touchstones: Make Rituals from Memories," is charming. I felt that the author was talking to me.

The book has been used by families in Hospice and grief counseling situations. Joy Johnson, founder of The Centering Corporation, a bereavement resource center, in her

foreword calls *In My Mother's Kitchen* one her favorite tools. This is a gentle book for pleasure now, and for healing when we need it.