



I'm Counting to 10...: Hope and Humor for Frazzled Parents

Jahnna Beecham, Malcolm Hillgartner

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All parents of young children have a secret, something they find amusing that other adults consider disgusting. Accidentally swallowing the cup of water your daughter used to brush her teeth, pointing out road kill to stop the kids from fighting in the car, letting the neighbor boy -- who can't find a Kleenex -- blow his nose on your skirt.

I'm Counting to 10 . . . , by parents Jahnna Beecham and Malcolm Hillgartner, chronicles the lives of a slightly offbeat couple and their two young kids with 45 humorous anecdotes. Not for the faint of heart, or for those in pre-parent years (they may choose not to have children after reading this book). Parents in the trenches, however, driving minivans filled with Happy Meal containers, discarded clothing and melted crayons, will find inspiration and understanding in I'm Counting to 10 . . .

To show their firsthand understanding of the subject, Beecham and Hillgartner confess their own parenting shortcomings ("There are times when I've served the kids cereal in bowls that I'm not quite sure have been cleaned or just licked clean by the dogs.") and share their reassuring discoveries ("At first we worried everything would kill him. Then we realized almost nothing could.").

I'm Counting to 10 . . . also offers clever tips from toilet training (pour blue cake decorating sprinkles in the toilet and dare your child to turn them green) to home improvement (let your kids make a game out of tearing off old wallpaper) to finding the perfect baby sitter (only hire sitters who have majored in nursing and child psychology, and minored in physical education and art ... and expect to pay them more than you earn).

Beecham and Hillgartner's stories help parents delight in their responsibilities through laughter and reflection. Perhaps you no longer pamper yourself or share candlelight dinners with your spouse, but you love the cute things your kids say and seeing them snuggled up comfortably after they're tucked in for the night.

I'm Counting to 10 . . . celebrates the messy art of parenting, helping adults who fear losing their mind, their dignity, and their hearing because of their kids. Beecham and Hillgartner uncover the universal truth that there is no right way to parent, and parenting experts don't need a Ph.D. Their only necessary titles are "Mom" and "Dad". Consider I'm Counting to 10 . . . the textbook, the owner's manual, for parents struggling to navigate the perils and appreciate the pleasures of raising children -- and that, of course, includes all of us.

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