



## Understanding parental toxicity: An analytical review of “Toxic Parents”

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### Abstract

As parenting influences the entire lives of children, toxic parenting also negatively influences their lives. A significant reference for almost all the studies related to toxic parenting is the book “Toxic Parents - Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life” by Susan Forward and Craig Buck. Even though the book's last edition was published in 2002, it is relevant even today, and the book can act as a guide to parents, parents-to-be, children, and, ultimately, everyone and for further research. The book deals with different types and consequences of toxic parenting through Susan Forward's professional experience. Thus, this book provides awareness about toxic parenting to everyone and even acts as a self-help book for survivors of toxic parenting. This article is a book review of the book “Toxic Parents - Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life” by Susan Forward and Craig Buck. This review highlights the book's relevance for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand the psychological impact of toxic parenting.

**Keywords:** Toxic parenting, book review, parent-child relationships

### Book Review

Toxic parenting is indispensable and relevant in a society where the discourse regarding one's mental health and well-being is more prevalent than earlier. The book “Toxic Parents - Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy Reclaiming Your Life” delves into the complicated intricacies of parenting, its long-term consequences, and management strategies for the victims. This book, written by Susan Forward and Craig Buck, offers priceless knowledge into comprehending and overcoming the short-term and long-term consequences of toxic parenting. Toxic parenting negatively influences the entire lives of children. Toxic parenting can make a child depressed and stressed, result in a lack of self-confidence, and can negatively affect the child's future development (Rianti & Dahlan, 2022). The authors of the book state that it is very challenging for adult children of toxic parents to form a healthy self-image since they continue to carry the weight of guilt and inadequacy, and this loss of self-worth and confidence can affect every part of their lives.

Susan Forward, Ph.D., was an internationally renowned author, lecturer, and therapist. Her works include *Toxic Parents and Men Who Hate Women* and *the Women Who Love Them*, both of which are New York Times bestsellers. She has worked as a therapist, teacher, and consultant in several Southern California medical and mental health facilities in addition to her private practice. Craig Buck was a writer, journalist, and screenwriter, and Susan Forward mentions that he gave form to the story Susan Forward wanted to tell. With Craig Buck, Susan Forward wrote the book “Toxic Parents - Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy Reclaiming Your Life.” As a therapist, Susan Forward has quoted verbatim and cases along with her findings in the book. The author quotes cases of clients, adult children of toxic parents who were suffering throughout their lives due to wrong upbringing. While the first part of the book explains different types of toxic parenting and its effects

even in the adult life of a child, with the help of many cases, the second part of the book is exclusively for the victims. It offers them strategies to help in the healing process. The book explains how parenting, especially negative patterns in parenting, influences children and how it is carried throughout their lives. The book's first part concerns toxic parents, and the second concerns reclaiming life. The first part includes chapters one to seven, where chapter one explains the idea of parenting and introduces toxic parents. Chapters two to seven explain different types of toxic parents, such as inadequate parents, Controllers, Alcoholics, Verbal Abusers, Physical Abusers, and Sexual Abusers. Chapter eight is conclusory and describes the toxic family systems. The second part is “Reclaiming Your Life” and includes chapters nine to fifteen. The second part of the book is mainly for the victims or the children of toxic parents. The second part of the book helps the children of toxic parents to heal and helps them understand that whatever they have been suffering from because of their parents is not their fault. Thus, the second part helps to heal the wound and build a better future. Since Susan Forward focused on the adult children of toxic parents, the book explains the long-term effects of toxic parenting in detail. So, the book explains the remarkable effects of toxic parenting on their personal lives, relationships, and careers. There are limited studies on toxic parenting, and Susan Forward's book is a primary reference for all the studies that have been carried out to date. The book helps identify and raise awareness of toxic parenting. Even though the book's last edition was written a decade ago, it is relevant now and in the coming years. The findings of recent empirical studies on toxic parenting also align with what Susan Forward has mentioned in her book based on the case studies. This increases the relevancy of the book in present society. The book continues to serve as a lifesaver for numerous individuals trying to break the cycle and overcome the effects of toxic parenting due to its enduring wisdom and

practicality in management strategies. This book will help in the process of healing and self-awareness for anyone crossing the tumultuous current of toxic parents. It is relevant in a society where parenting is always glorified, and negative patterns in parenting are often foreseen and serve as literature for further research. The book is a good read for parents, parents-to-be, children, and everyone facing difficulties in life and hope for a better future. It has since become a popular resource for individuals seeking to understand and cope with complex relationships with their parents.

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We, the authors, declare that we have no conflicts of interest related to this research project. All aspects of this study were conducted with objectivity and integrity.

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#### Ethical considerations

This article has no human participants, and informed consent is not required.

#### Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

**Authors:** Susan Forward, Craig Buck

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