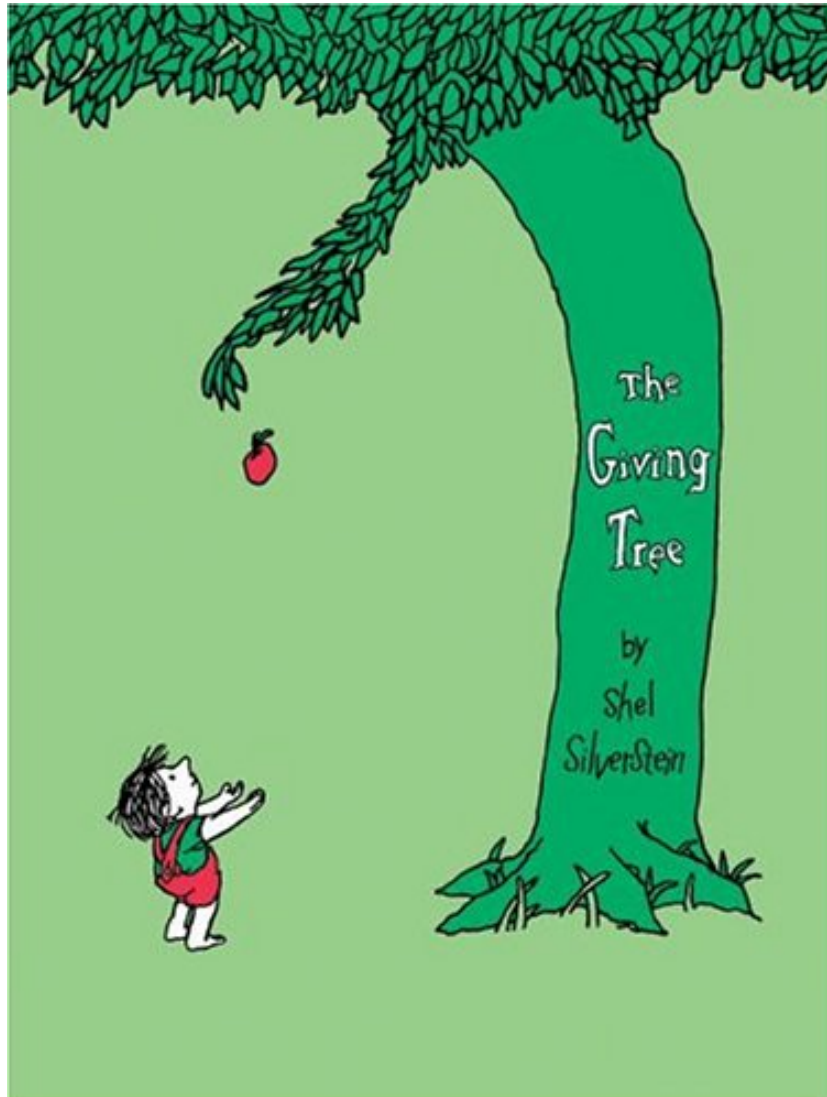


The Giving Tree Book PDF Download



**By:
Shel Silverstein**

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What people Say:

David

Okay, this some motherfuckin' fucked-up shit right here.

is the straight-up wack story of how this selfish little ass-faced prick kicks it with this full-on saintly tree. Ever'thin' fine for a while, y'all, with the lil' prick all gettin' up in there an' sayin' to the tree, "Yeah, you know you mah bitch," but then all of a sudden, this jumped-up prick go through puberty, get his chia on or some such shit, and so he

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Okay, so that's not really the way

ends, but maybe it's the way it should. Some time ago, my ex-girlfriend and, afterward, long-time co-dependent friend gave me

as part of my birthday gift. I loved it, but I hated it, too, because I felt so bad for the tree who is endlessly shat upon by this worthless "Boy"--as he is always known, regardless of age; I longed to console the tree and, maybe a little, to condemn this book as yet another emotionally-scarring "children's" entertainment in the manner of

. Don't give me any shit about learning valuable lessons. The only lesson I learned was that human beings are nothing but steaming piles of corn-freckled feces, and that I wanted to found a not-for-profit shelter for unloved trees and rabid dogs and any other nonhuman thing, living or not, which was either unwanted or despised.

Having said all this -- and although I don't approve of the treatment of the giving tree -- this book is very moving and very delicate. The delicacy is somewhat counteracted when the reader turns over the book and sees the author photograph of a thoroughly evil-looking Shel Silverstein. He looks like the sort of person who would burn down whole forests of rare giving trees just for kicks. Picture Othello just before he strangles Desdemona.

If you -- and, yes, I'm talking to you personally -- are not moved by the plight of the tree after reading this book, then perhaps it's time to go an' check yo'self: are you the givin' tree or are you the motherfuckin'

Nathan

I know that many people have a sentimental love for this book, and I respect that -- you can't rationalize emotional connection. And generally, I like this author. But with this book, since it inspired no real emotional response in me, I am left with only the rational perspective, which in me was this:

This book troubles me deeply, because it enshrines self-destructive and self-pitying martyrdom as the paragon of love for others. And I think there is already far too much of this in our society.

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This book troubles me deeply, because it enshrines self-destructive and self-pitying martyrdom as the paragon of love for others. And I think there is already far too much of this in our society. This book seems to say that if you really love someone else, you will damage yourself, cripple yourself, tear down your boundaries, destroy yourself for them. And further, it implies that those who are

loved must by nature use and devour those who love them. An incredibly unhealthy model for love and relationships, especially for a child's book.

I am a parent of two, and though many parents have offered up this book as representative of the true nature of parental love, I cannot agree. If I were to raise my children this way, I feel I would only be teaching them to take selfishly from those who love them, to use people up and always expect more -- and on the flip side, I would be teaching them that if they love someone then they have to give of themselves until it hurts, have to live without boundaries of any kind.

Instead of raising my kids this way, I feel it's important to teach them to respect those who love them and care for them, to not take from others so much that it damages; I feel it's important to teach them that even in love we all must maintain our boundaries, our integrity. I feel it's important that my kids, and all kids really, understand that real, healthy love does not demand destruction or diminishment of anyone involved in it, that in fact real and healthy love ultimately heals and builds up those who participate in it.

I suppose that this book may have been intended as an anti-lesson, an example of how NOT to behave -- but if so, then it was not made clear that this was the case, because most people who read this book seem to take it as an ideal example of love.

Certainly it's possible to not take it so seriously; but when the underlying message and philosophy is so concentrated and heavy-handed, it's hard to avoid tasting it in every passage.

It reminds me of that other beloved childhood book about love, where the young boy's mother is so obsessive about cuddling him and tucking him in at night that even as he gets older and older, she follows him around, sneaks into his college dorm, sneaks into his home as an adult, takes him from his bed with his wife still sleeping and reassures him (herself?) that he'll "always be my baby".

shudder

Overall: Sweet, but to the point of being cloying, and a disturbing message. =/

Patrick

I recently read this book to my little boy.

It's not the first time I've read it. It's probably not even the tenth time. But it's the first time I've read the book in a decade, and given the fact that my memory is like a cheese grater, I like to think I got a pretty fresh experience.

The result is this: I honestly don't know how I feel about this book.

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Even if you haven't read the story, you probably know the gist of it. A tree loves a young boy and gives away pieces of itself to the boy to make the boy happy.

On one hand, this story can be taken as an open, honest exhortation toward selfless Agape-style love. Love which asks nothing. Love which gives everything.

On the other hand, this story can be read as a horrifying condemnation of dysfunctional unrequited co-dependance.

Sava Hecht

Co-dependent tree needs to set some fucking boundaries.

Mer

Scrolling down, it seems several reviewers resent this book's apparently heavy-handed message about selfishness/selflessness. I can totally understand why they find it upsetting or sappy. Overbearing, even. But I don't agree.

Some fascinating theories have been put forth about

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It's deceptively simple on its surface, yes. But if this were truly just some hard and fast hippie dippy morality tale, would its two main characters (living natural tree, growing human boy) and their relationship have weathered such extensive interpretation over the years?

Professor Timothy Jackson from Stanford University (found on Wiki):

An admirable assessment from a theologian... although as a wee grub, my perception was different. My own folks, secular humanist scientists who taught me a "recycle, reduce, reuse" mantra at around age four, introduced me to

around the same time we started reading

. (Another seminal doozy!) Perhaps due to their influence on my early development, I came away from both books with a lot of very heavy, persistent questions concerning humanity's careless attitude towards ye olde Mother Earth.