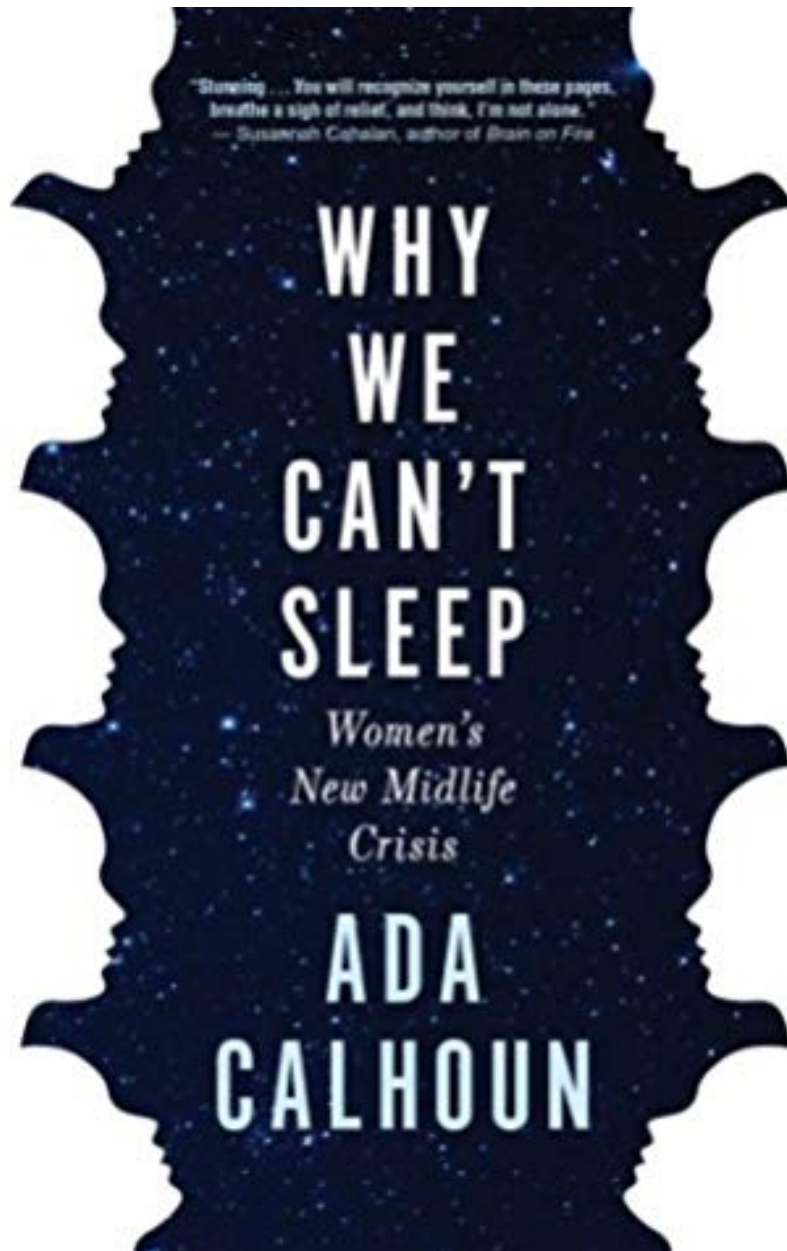


Why We Can't Sleep: Women's New Midlife Crisis Book PDF Download



**By:
Ada Calhoun**

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Cari

I was lucky to receive an early copy of this book from Edelweiss. I have read a lot of books about women in today's society, but never one that examined the problem from a generational lens. I did my master's research paper on generations in the workplace, specifically the library, and it was really interesting to get a new perspective on it. Calhoun is a member of Generation X, and so the book focuses mostly on that generation, but there is plenty of context from the other generations as well.

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well. It was a really eye-opening way to look at the multiple disconnects in American middle-class society, and the takeaway is also that Generation X is stronger than they think. Having dealt with a lot of crap in their young lives, hitting the workforce at the time of some major recessions, and now being in debt and squeezed between young kids and aging parents - and yet they keep pressing on, working hard, showing the world that they have something to offer. I myself am an early Millennial, one year away from being Gen X - sometimes we're known as the "Oregon Trail Generation" because we were the last kids to grow up without the Internet, but we did have computers, and we had Oregon Trail. So I learned some things about growing up in the 70s, while also relating to the world of the 80s, which I vaguely remember from my young childhood. Although there aren't easy answers to the conundrums here, the book sheds light on them and offers perspective. Although Calhoun does talk about her life (my favorite anecdote was about "British Club") it's less a memoir than some of the other books on this topic - more of thorough, researched journalism, which is refreshing. I do love a good memoir and an author's perspective, but it was nice to see a different approach.

P.S.G. Lopes

***I cannot believe I was blessed to read this AMAZING book before it was formally released. I was invited to read this book through #NetGalley. ***

Ada Calhoun's Why We Can't Sleep has become my bible, my battle cry, my feminist go-to book for women my age. I got so much out of reading this book. The very second I picked up this book I literally absorbed each and every word and got angrier (in the best possible way), more passionate, and more dedicated to my own goals and missions.

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I legitimately thought I was all alone. I was relieved and felt vindicated in reading this book. I enjoyed reading how the author interviewed many women of our generation and I liked how not every woman had their lives all mapped out. The book was immensely relatable and any woman who grew up in the 1980s will understand all of the references, will understand about the laissez-faire manner in which we were raised by our parents and handled by teachers and administration. We inherited a lot of negative things that we had no idea would reverberate for so many years to come.

I, too, grew up believing that I was entitled to the American Dream. I, too, wanted to have it all but nearing 40, I have nothing. This was not from lack of trying. We were lied to as kids. We were raised, brainwashed, really, into thinking that every single person would grow up to be successful and to believe that we would all be married by 30, have two point five kids, live in a big house in an affluent area, and have a slew of cats and dogs. I have none of those. I never got married, I only recently decided to take the leap and finally pursue my dream even though I am so, so poor and often regret my decision. I have no kids, no desire to have them, and spent too many years trying to please others and trying to fit into some mold that other people tried shoving me in. I've only recently grown the huevos to finally say enough is enough and to fight for what I want in life.

This book is a testament to women of our generation to keep fighting for what we want in life. Happiness really is relative and we have to fight for what happiness feels like by our own definition, not by what society claims will make us happy. I liked how Ms. Calhoun discusses the repercussions of feminism. I like exploring the idea of what the first wave of feminists had envisioned and what feminism looks like now. I feel that because of this movement, women who do not have the personality or disposition to hold a traditional full-time job that is demanding and lucrative is seen as weak, lazy, or unambitious. I like exploring the concept that feminism has many layers and that having that job does not make you more of a woman, and not having that job, does not make you less of one.

My dissertation was about the recession implications of employment challenges faced by single, educated, childless women in the United States. I wrote this at a time where I could not get enough people to participate in my study. I feel that my topic was way ahead of its time but feel I'd make more progress with this topic now. Women are braver now, more confident, and are paving their own futures regardless of perceived societal norms. More women are opting to marry later, if at all,

and are opting to have children later, or not at all. I feel that I spent my whole life taking care of other people. At this phase in my life, I'm choosing to be selfish and to take care of myself for once and that doesn't involve getting married or having children. I'm at peace with my decision. Yes, I worry about my future. Yes, I worry about not having a pension, 401k, decent health insurance, a man to grow old with to help me financially, etc. I worry about those things every day. But this book allowed me to feel how I feel without judgment, without fear, and with relief that others feel and think similarly to how I feel. I am so privileged to be able to have read this book early. What an amazing read and worth reading if you are a Generation X, middle-aged woman, who is still trying to figure out why the hell we can't sleep!

Bkwmlee

3.5 stars

Self-help books have always been a bit of a "hit and miss" for me, which is why I'm very selective when it comes to choosing books from this genre to read. Of course, first and foremost, the subject matter needs to be interesting and also relevant to my current situation " on this count, Ada Calhoun's newest book

did deliver, however in some ways, it also fell a bit short of expectations for me.

As a member of Generation X (like the author herself), it's refreshing

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did deliver, however in some ways, it also fell a bit short of expectations for me.

As a member of Generation X (like the author herself), it's refreshing to read a book that was able to articulate so much of what I have experienced and felt for most of my life up to this point. Many of the insights that Calhoun presented were spot-on, to the point that I found myself nodding my head a lot in understanding and agreement. In addition to being extremely well-researched, with the material laid out in a format that was organized and easy to read, one of the things I appreciated most about this book was the author's approach to the subject matter " through interviews

with hundreds of women, most of them from Generation X, all of whom candidly shared their stories about their struggles and challenges, Calhoun was able to establish a sense of resonance with readers that other books on the same subject mostly lacked.

On a personal level, I'm the type of reader who tends to shy away from books that I consider to be too "scientific" in nature, especially ones that are overloaded with a lot of facts, figures, statistics, etc., as I usually find these books boring and as a result, I lose focus really quickly. This book was different in that Calhoun didn't just regurgitate a bunch of facts and results from studies to support them " rather, she incorporated her own personal experiences as well as those of many other women from different walks of life to create a more anecdotal read, which I feel worked well. With that said though, I think one of the things this book lacked was, ironically, the "self-help" portion, in that it didn't really present solutions on how to overcome the challenges that Generation X often faced overall. Yes, Calhoun does talk about what worked for her, and with a few of the other women interviewed, she also covered how they ended up improving their particular situations, but a lot of it was very specific to them and their lives. Basically, this book was insightful in terms of explaining the "why" portion, but it didn't really go into the "what to do about how we're feeling" portion, at least not in a way that was helpful in my circumstances.

Overall, I feel that this book is definitely worth a read, but I think how much readers would be able to relate to it depends on their personal situations (which I believe is why the reviews for this book are all over the place). I certainly got some things out of it (mostly knowledge in that I found out some stuff I didn't know before), but as I said earlier, I also found quite a few things lacking. I would still recommend this book, but with a warning not to go into it with too many pre-established expectations " if it works for you, then great, but if it doesn't, that should be fine too.

Angela

Confession: being born in 1981, this classifies me as a (very old) Millennial and not a Gen Xer. But I figure I had a crush on Zach Morris as a kid, so, you know, I'm close enough to Calhoun's target demographic to warrant

Confession: being born in 1981, this classifies me as a (very old) Millennial and not a Gen Xer. But I figure I had a crush on Zach Morris as a kid, so, you know, I'm close enough to Calhoun's target demographic to warrant reading this book and subsequently writing this review.

The good: this book was well researched. Calhoun gives facts, figures, and stats that she pulled from a variety of studies, and she has the citations to prove it. She also interviewed a large

smattering of different Gen X ladies to gain their insights for this book.

Additionally, I appreciated how this book was organized into different sections - from caregiving to job instability to money to being single and childless to post-divorce. This way, it was easier for me to skim through the sections that were less relevant to my life (raising kiddos... yawn) and focus more on the ME sections. I mean, I am a selfish Millennial, after all.

The not so good: although well researched, I wouldn't say I necessarily learned anything new nor earth shattering from reading this book. Gen Xer ladies grew up hearing they could have it all... and this book shows that being told you're supposed to be kick-a\$\$ at everything leads to ladies feeling like they're failing at something.

Also, although there was a lot of information on *Why We Can't Sleep*... but not so much information on *What To Do To Help Us Sleep*. Calhoun does share a few tidbits in the final chapter of what's helped her, but they're very tailored specifically to her life and her situation. Additionally, and this is on me, I'm just not the biggest fan of self help books (which this book kinda-sorta is). Although it wasn't particularly long at less than 300 pages, it felt like the same information was repeated over and over - which is a trait I find in a lot of self help books. Lastly, I found this book to be rather depressing. Regardless of if the Gen X ladies interviewed for this book were mothers, childless, married, single, gay, straight, the breadwinners, or jobless, they were all stressed out and unhappy on some level.

Thanks to NetGally for an ARC of *Why We Can't Sleep* in exchange for my honest review.