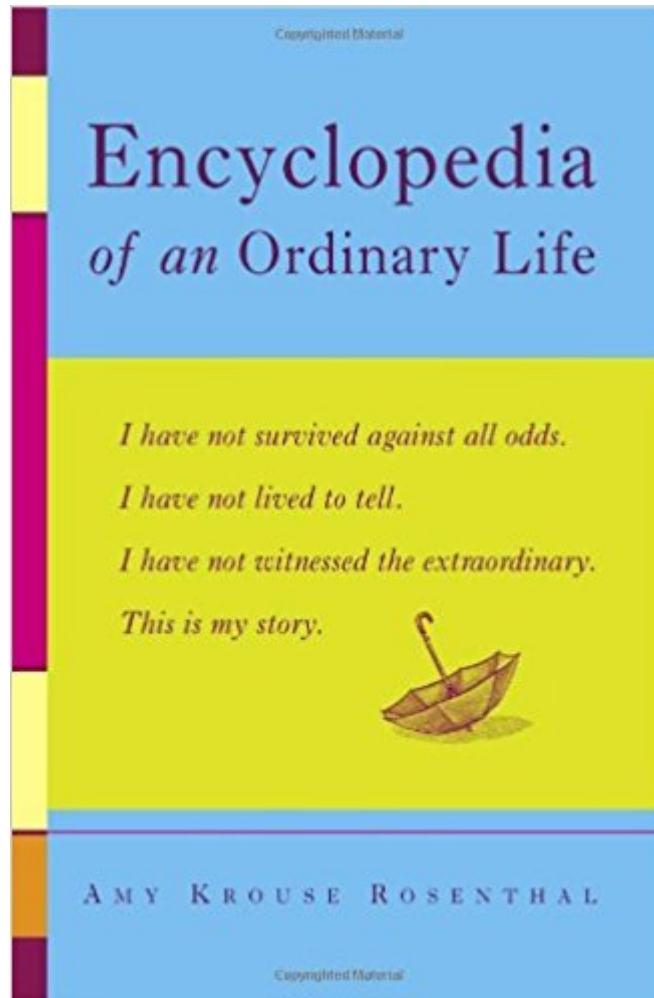




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# Encyclopedia Of An Ordinary Life



## Synopsis

From the author of the viral Modern Love column, "You May Want to Marry My Husband." In *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*, Amy Krouse Rosenthal has ingeniously adapted the centuries-old format of the encyclopedia to convey the accumulated knowledge of her lifetime in a poignant, wise, often funny, fully realized memoir. Using mostly short entries organized from A to Z, many of which are cross-referenced, Rosenthal captures in wonderful and episodic detail the moments, observations, and emotions that comprise a contemporary life. Start anywhere—preferably at the beginning—and see how one young woman's alphabetized existence can open up and define the world in new and unexpected ways. An ordinary life, perhaps, but an extraordinary book.

Cross-section of ordinary life at this exact moment

A security guard is loosening his belt. A couple is at a sushi restaurant with some old friends. They are reminiscing. In the back of their minds, they are thinking of being home. A woman is trying to suck on a cherry Lifesaver but will end up biting it in six seconds. A little boy is riding the train home with his dad after spending the day together at his office. A man is running back into a grocery store to look for a scarf he dropped. He will leave with the phone number of a woman who will become his wife. Words the author meant to use: Flair, Luxurious, Panoply, Churlish, Dainty, Folly

Wines that go nicely with this book

reds: Marcel Lapierre Morgon (France), Alario Dolcetto d'Alba Costa Fiore (Italy)

whites: King Estate Pinot Gris (Oregon), Landmark Chardonnay Overlook (California)

Book, standing in the bookstore holding a

If I am standing there with the book in my hand, one of three things has already happened: Friend recommended it. Read a good review. Cover caught my eye. I can appreciate a cool cover. But it's like the extra credit part of a test—it only enhances an already solid grade. Getting it right won't help if most everything else is wrong. And getting it wrong won't hurt if most everything else is right. (There are countless books I cherish whose covers I don't like too much, or cannot even now recall.)

The interior of the book—the terrain of its pages, where all those words took me, the tiny but very real spot it ultimately occupies in my mind—that becomes the book. Next I go to the flaps. The front flap needs to intrigue/not bore me, and the bio needs to tell me just enough about the author.

I'll do my best to extract the author's entire existence from their 2-X-2 inch photo. Off to the back cover. I'll be momentarily impressed when I see a blurb by a hot writer like \_\_\_\_\_, but I know that it is just as likely that I'll like the book as hate it regardless of these quotes. I look at them in a more voyeuristic way, like a literary gaper's delay: Wow, the author knows So and So. Bet they send each other clever text messages. Really the only thing I can gauge from the blurbs is my own pathetic jealousy level. To get a true sense of the book, I have to

spend a minute inside. I'll glance at the first couple pages, then flip to the middle, see if the language matches me somehow. It's like dating, only with sentences. Some sentences, no matter how well-dressed or nice, just don't do it for me. Others I click with instantly. It could be something as simple yet weirdly potent as a single word choice (tangerine). We're meant to be, that sentence and me. And when it happens, you just know.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I have not survived against all odds. I have not lived to tell. I have not witnessed the extraordinary. This is my story." Amy Krouse Rosenthal, one-time *Might* magazine columnist and self-confessed hater of the segue has written a snappy, random, remarkable memoir--the first of its kind to give readers an honest flaws-n-all perspective of what it's like to be...ordinary. Initially inspired by the "bizarre, haphazard arrangement" of *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shonagon, Rosenthal has collected a lifetime of thoughts, observations, and decisions, and created an alphabetized personal encyclopedia, complete with cross-referenced entries and illustrations. Rosenthal reveals the minutiae of her life, from pumping gas ("Every. Single. Solitary. Time I go to get gas I have to lean out the window to see which side the tank is on"), to witnessing her son's accident ("I saw with front-row-seat clarity, just how quickly, randomly, and mercilessly your child can be taken away"), and in turns both playful and poignant, engages the reader in effortless and stimulating conversation. Whether you are laughing aloud or nodding along, reading *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* is like being introduced to a new friend--one that you automatically connect with and feel compelled to share. Fans of Dave Eggers, David Sedaris, and shows like *Arrested*

Development and Scrubs will appreciate Rosenthal's quirky, conversational humor and dead-on observations. Writers will see the book as a contemporary portrait of the fledgling artist, and should enjoy her aptly named, "Evolution of this Moment"--a timeline tracking her growth as a writer from her first word ("more") to publication of her fourth book. Modesty prevents Rosenthal from acknowledging herself as anything other than ordinary--that, and the fact that she has not "survived against all odds"--but that certainly does not mean she has nothing to say, or to share. Her delightful memoir is a reminder that life is not always an adventure, but it can be full of sad, silly, and important moments that make it worth living. Witness the generosity of an author who is willing to reveal so much of herself, not just as a writer, but also as a person--share this delightfully quirky, utterly enjoyable book with family and friends with a note, "Here is someone I think you should meet." --Daphne Durham .com Exclusive Content

**The Lost and Found Project** Between January 25th and February 1st, hundreds of copies of Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life were intentionally left in random places (taxis, public bathrooms, laundromats) in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. Each book was inscribed with a note from the author, and the finder was encouraged to report back to Rosenthal's website ([www.encyclopediaofanordinarylife.com](http://www.encyclopediaofanordinarylife.com)) when and where the book was discovered. Watch the "Lost and Found" video directed by filmmaker Steve Delahoyde, documenting Rosenthal's test run and featuring her theme song, "This is My Story." Listen to the theme song written by Tony Rogers.

**Ordinary Life from A to Z** How do you interview a smart, creative, clever author like Amy Krouse Rosenthal? You agree to let her start with the questions, and hang on for the ride. Find out more about Amy and sneak a peek behind-the-scenes at .com with this decidedly ordinary email correspondence between Ms. Rosenthal and senior editor Daphne Durham. Read our unusual interview with author Amy Krouse Rosenthal. Extra Ordinary Excerpts A B G I W --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Rosenthal likes lists: of low points in her life, codes that people memorize, sounds that seem loud though they're actually quiet. She loves inadvertently mysterious signs, like this public restroom gem: "PLEASE DO NOT FLUSH EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF TOILET PAPER OR SHOES DOWN THE TOILET. THANK YOU." She's collected some wonderful words like "flahoolick" (meaning generous and expansive) and "wabi-sabi" (which seamlessly fuses two moods), as well as some pairs of oddly similar words like applause and applesauce. But what to do with all this trivia? Why, frame it all around some lists of childhood memories and career milestones, alphabetize it and

•she's assembled something like a memoir. Rosenthal warns readers that her life has not been extraordinary in the least

•she hasn't "survived against all odds,"

recovered from any addictions or been a genius, misunderstood or otherwise. Not only does she consider her life "ordinary" (actually, she's worked for ad agencies, written a few books and worked for several public radio stations), but her preoccupations are with the entirely mundane: breaking appliances, leaving messages on answering machines, loading dishwashers, loving Q-tips. Browse this "encyclopedia" in any bookstore, and it looks too cute to resist, especially with its coy, reference book-style illustrations. Whether it remains endearing once it's home depends on how fascinating people find someone else's somewhat ordinary life. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I read this book in part because I read what was possibly the last letter you wrote to the lucky woman who should marry your catch of a husband after you pass on. I didn't know quite what to expect but what I feel resonated with me was that you are/were brave enough to publish all of your random thoughts and say this is me deal with it. For that I applaud you because in a sense I see this as an anthem for the square pegs. I want to start writing letters to authors from this day forth and leave random happy change for ppl to find and maybe if I'm lucky, I'll get a postcard one day. I want to honor a brave kind woman whose book I read and am the better for it.

I liked that this book was essentially tidbits of Amy Krouse Rosenthal's life up to the point of the book's release. I read her more recent 'Textbook' first, and liked it so thought I would read 'Encyclopedia'. I did like 'Textbook' better, but 'Encyclopedia' was entertaining as well. I discovered her work after reading a public interest news article that had let the public know she passed away. It mentioned her last writing - a personal ad of sorts for her husband whom she didn't want to see remain lonely. It was a moving piece. That led me to 'Textbook' which led me to 'Encyclopedia'. 'Textbook' seemed to have a bit more maturity, was just a bit more touching, with just a bit of poignancy, but I would recommend this book. I had a few laugh out loud moments, and several items made me smile. It was definitely worth my time. If you get it and like it, you will also like 'Textbook'

I liked the format, it was different and offbeat. I see others found this not to be the case. Amy went to the beat of her own drum. I like A-Z with little quips about the author and/or her randomness. I like that she pulls her readers in and invites them into her life. As someone who remembers nearly everything in life, I enjoyed her shared randomness. I like different and she does that very well.

I first discovered this author by falling in love with her children's books, "I wish you more" and "That's me loving you." I was interested to see that she has many other books for adults too. Wasn't sure what I was getting with this but thought the idea was interesting. Such a creative idea to tell one's life story! So many times she would discuss something and I would be shocked to think that there was someone else who thought the same thing as me! After reading this book you'll wish this down to earth and fun author could be your best friend!

Written by a lovely, funny, poignant woman who is surely missed by anyone who was close to her. Her innate gift of embracing the rareness of life's simplicities, which in and of itself almost sounds like an oxymoron, makes losing her all the more difficult. Although we never met, her words in this clever book allowed me to connect to her essence in a most playful way. I suspect she would have liked knowing that.

This quirky, fun little book is all about Amy, the author. Structured like an encyclopedia, with entries on all kinds of topics, Amy's encyclopedia entry covers everything from parking tickets to toast, the deep to the mundane. It is charmingly written and is surprisingly amusing and fun to read. My only complaint is that the structure of the book is such that I didn't really want to sit down and read it for more than a half hour or so, because there isn't really a narrative flow. This would be a great book to keep in the car for those moments when you have to wait for someone or kill a few minutes at a time. That said, the idea is so innovative and it is so charmingly carried out that I'd definitely recommend it. I enjoyed it all the way through, and the way she made the mundane things of life so interesting, gave me some new ways of looking at the mundane things of my own life.

What a lovely memoir! It is such a different approach. We lost Amy way too soon.

This is a cute book, will make you chuckle, but kinda forgettable after 2 months. If a friend had it, I'd borrow it, but if I were to do it over again I wouldn't pay for it.

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