

Finding My Way: A Memoir of Family, Identity, and Political Ambition

Robin F. Schepper

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Robin Schepper's memoir *Finding My Way* interrogates the past to nurse ambitions for the future.

Schepper was born in California in the 1960s. Her mother was a flight attendant for Pan Am; the father's name listed on her birth certificate was incorrect. The mother-daughter duo moved to New York to live near Schepper's German grandmother, a masseuse whose studio offered other services too. As a result, Schepper's childhood was full of secrets and unknowns. In adulthood, adherence to truth became her mission.

At school, Schepper lobbied for more sex education. During college in California, she tried to locate her father. Using her German skills and air travel habits, she studied and lived abroad too. Later, she worked on political campaigns (including Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative), planned big events (like the Olympics in Greece), and ran a communications firm, in addition to getting married and adopting two sons. After learning about her biological father, she reconciled with the mother and grandmother whose traumas hurt her but gave her grit.

Revealing secrets and dispelling the associated shame, the book shares difficult stories about hasty moves, family conflicts, and colorful dating experiences. Its momentum is strong, and its prose has a spontaneous quality—both candid and conversational, marked by exclamations, soul-searching, and entertaining anecdotes. But its use of superlatives compromises its otherwise convincing explanations of its positions. And the book's chapter titles, which feature repeating dates, interrupt its natural, chronological flow, while the included photographs, which are inserted in the middle of the book, don't all make sense until the book is complete (and some spoil later surprises).

The political arenas in which Schepper worked end up coloring and sharpening the text. Determined to find out the truth about her past, she wound up fighting for transparency in democracy too. She was prompted to end relationships based on her own desires for independence and to support her aspirations. Further, during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, Schepper's painful memories of abuse were triggered, leading her to pursue justice. Indeed, she used her personal history to chart a vision for the future. Without dwelling on mistakes, the book works toward a hopeful ending with lessons that are applicable to other seekers too.

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MARI CARLSON (November 28, 2022)

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