

## Reconnecting with Your Estranged Adult Child: Practical Tips and Tools to Heal Your Relationship

**Tina Gilbertson**

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The practical guide *Reconnecting with Your Estranged Adult Child* centralizes a topic that's often mired in shame.

Estrangement between parents and children is much more common than is acknowledged. Tina Gilbertson's book thus starts off with a simple message: you are not alone. Its first and most important aim is to relieve parents of their crippling pain; only then, it says, will they be able to take manageable steps toward improving their situations.

Though it reflects a belief that every parent loves their children and is doing their best, the book also expresses the notion that every child has potential; no one is too far gone. This balanced approach helps to bridge generational divides and generate parents' empathy for their children.

Modeling both hope and protective boundaries, the book advocates for viewing life in a holistic way and re-centering broken relationships. It advises parents to keep enjoying life, even when they aren't speaking with their children, and to prioritize their emotional health. It also wrestles with the realities of trauma, addiction, and other prevalent complicating factors that fuel estrangement.

This emotionally intelligent text will be useful as parents work to identify and understand their own feelings, and to communicate them in safe spaces. By walking parents through the processing of emotions, its work will equip parents to approach their children in a safe, open, and nondemanding way. It paves the way for emotional conversations once relationships are reestablished. Its emphasis on emotional literacy is vital, particularly when so many families have established habits of not discussing feelings. The skills it encourages are transferable within a range of family relationships—not just troubled ones.

*Reconnecting with Your Estranged Adult Child* is a self-help work that encourages parents to heal and to build the skills needed to reach out to their children.

MELISSA WUSKE (May / June 2020)

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