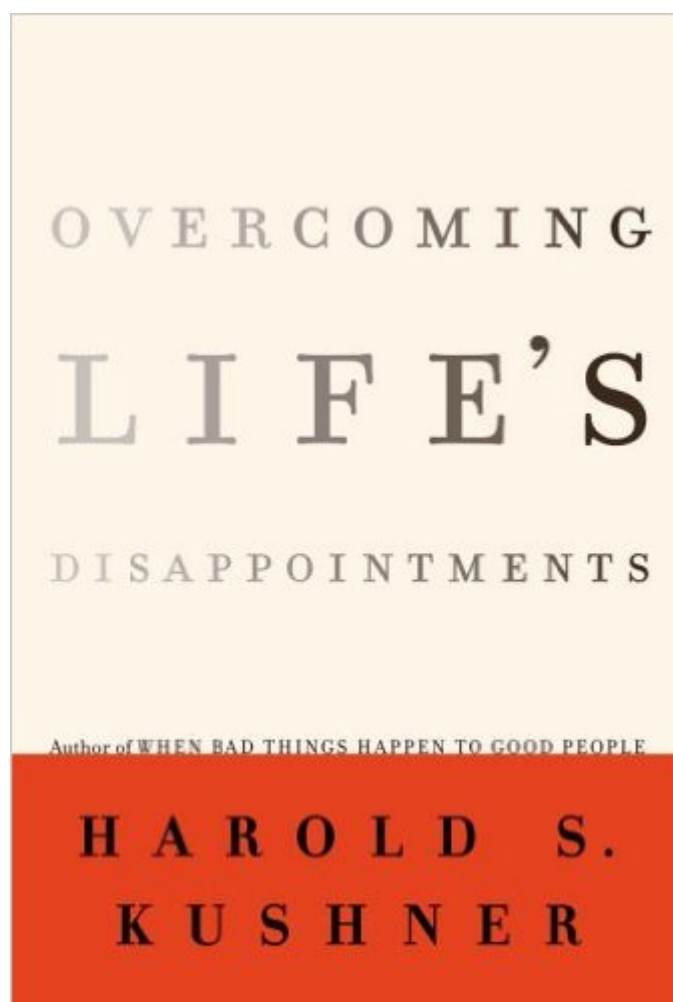


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Overcoming Life's Disappointments



Synopsis

From Harold S. Kushner, the author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, a book that shows us how to be our best selves even when things don't turn out as we had hoped—that is, how we can overcome life's disappointments. Kushner turns to the experience of Moses to find the requisite lessons of strength and faith. Moses towers over all others in the Old Testament: he is the man on the mountaintop to whom God speaks with unparalleled intimacy, and he leads his people out of bondage. But he is also deeply human, someone whose soaring triumphs are offset by frustration and longing: his people ignore his teachings, he is denied entrance to the Promised Land, his family suffers. But he overcomes. From the life of Moses, Kushner gleans principles that can help us deal with the problems we encounter. Through the example of Moses's remarkable resilience, we learn how to weather the disillusionment of dreams unfulfilled, the pain of a lost job or promotion, a child's failures, divorce or abandonment, and illness. We learn how to meet all disappointments with faith in ourselves and the future, and how to respond to heartbreak with understanding rather than bitterness and despair. This is a book of spiritual wisdom—as practical as it is inspiring.

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Customer Reviews

One of the hardest things for anyone to learn, no matter where you are in life, or how much money you have, is coping with times when things don't turn out as you expect. Some people never recover, while others seem to sail past a disaster with hardly a break in stride. The trick isn't in what

the disaster is, but how they've handled it. Longtime author Harold S. Kushner, best known for his *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, takes an intriguing look on the ability to cope by using the figure of Moses from the Bible. Yes, that Moses. Out of all of the various people in the Torah, he is undoubtedly the most complex. Most of us tend to visualize him as a certain actor from Hollywood, brawny, noble and imposing, able to smite down miscreants with a single blow, but for those who have studied Moses in the Bible find someone a bit more closer to earth. And if anyone had to deal with disappointment, it's certainly Moses. Called upon to lead the captive Jews out of Egypt, and facing down the most powerful ruler on Earth, it seems that once he's got them out in the wilderness at Sinai, things ought to be improving. Instead, what is happening when he returns with the first set of tablets? Why, they're worshipping an idol in the shape of a golden calf. And it doesn't even stop there -- throughout the forty years of exile, the people complain of thirst, hunger, and on and on and on -- enough to make anyone throw up their hands in disgust and walk away. And perhaps most bitter of all, Moses is denied entry into the Promised Land, and only allowed a glimpse of the goal that he's worked so hard for as he is dying. You have to admit, that's quite a disappointment. But not once during all of these setbacks, does Moses tell God that he gives up.

Who among us hasn't had a disappointment or two? Or three or four... OK, I'll stop counting. In this book Rabbi Harold S. turns his attention to how we can use disappointments to help us be better people. Using the story of Moses to illustrate his points, Rabbi Kushner explores all aspects of disappointment. When we aspire to achieve something, and fall short, we need to understand why we wanted it in the first place. Was it our authentic dream, or the dream our father had for us? Was the ideal really in our best interest? Did we work for it, or subversively against it? Did we fully commit and keep our promises? Can we let go of dreams, yet keep their memory with us, knowing something better is yet to come? Here's an excerpt: "What can we do with the dreams we have learned we must shed? Can we simply discard them as the embarrassing fantasies of immature youth? I don't see how we can or why we should. They were too much a part of us for too many years for us to pretend we never dreamed those dreams. When life gives us the inevitable message that our marriage will not be the 'happily ever after' we hoped it would, that our children will be other than who we dreamed they would be, that our careers will grind to a halt somewhere short of our imagined goal, and that the only road to sanity and happiness involves freeing ourselves from the tyranny of those dreams and the feelings of failure that accompany their nonfulfillment, what do we do then? We do what Moses did when he realized that his dream of teaching people to walk in God's ways would not be realized as easily as he had hoped, when the shattered fragments of the

commandments written by the hand of God lay in pieces at his feet.

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