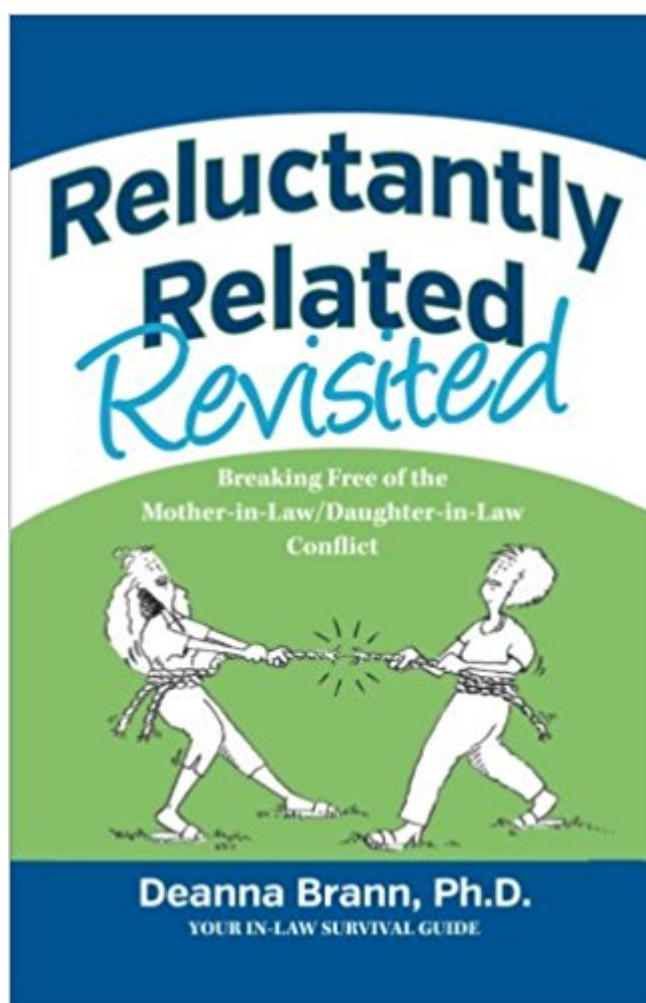


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# Reluctantly Related Revisited: Breaking Free Of The Mother-in-Law/Daughter-in-Law Conflict



## Synopsis

RELUCTANTLY RELATED REVISITED is the newest book from award-winning author Deanna Brann, Ph.D. With her trademark humor, compassion and years of experience, Dr. Brann explores the conflict that frequently arises in the mother-in-law (MIL)/daughter-in-law (DIL) relationship. Women everywhere know that the MIL/DIL relationship can be one of the most complex and difficult relationships they experience. Based on years of research and packed full of timely examples, RELUCTANTLY RELATED REVISITED highlights the issues and struggles created in the MIL/DIL relationship that add to the many disagreements frequently arising within families. Including detailed action steps to overcome conflict and build a long-lasting healthy rapport with your in-law, RELUCTANTLY RELATED REVISITED is a must-read for women everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Exceptionally well written and thoroughly 'reader friendly' in commentary, tone, and presentation," [Reluctantly Related Revisited: Breaking Free of the Mother-in-Law/Daughter-in-Law Conflict](#) "is a compelling and potentially life-changing read."  
- Midwest Book Review

excellent read! jean

What an excellent book! Very informative in an easy to read format, I was soaking up information like a sponge. It helped me to step outside of my situation and see it from a different perspective.

Great book! Highly recommend

I've been married for ten years. My relationship with my mother-in-law has never been easy or effortless. Our personalities are wildly different, and we don't have a whole lot in common. We respect each other, and we mostly get along...but I still get nervous every time she comes to visit. So when I saw this book, I was excited to read it. Brann packs a lot of information into this little paperback. Lots of good advice and suggestions for improving your relationship with your in-law. I think she's exactly right when she says that the relationship between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws is extremely important and influential to the rest of the family, but also fragile. There is an undercurrent of competition, she says, because both women want to feel that they most influence the son/husband. Some of my favorite insights from this book: (\*) We tend to talk and think in abstract concepts, and we focus on what's lacking. It becomes difficult to notice anything positive, and if we have an all-or-nothing mindset (i.e., either I experience "good" feelings with my MIL or it's all "bad"), we end up feeling like nothing is changing, nothing is getting better. Brann says that good stuff happens in teeny tiny baby steps, and you have to LOOK for it. Think of what SPECIFIC positive behaviors you would want to see from your in-law--for example, maybe a smile or a kind note; or maybe she will sit next to you on the couch when she visits. If you have a clear idea of what you're looking for, you'll actually notice it when it happens, instead of relying on your general feeling of "happiness" to tell you how the relationship is progressing. And if you see progress, you will probably feel more hopeful about the relationship. (\*) If you let your mom baby you in one area (i.e., you let her cook you dinner, pay for your lunch, do your laundry), you're basically giving her permission to baby you (and your spouse) in other areas. If you don't want to be treated like a child, don't fall back into that role. (\*) Be clear about what your spouse's expectations are regarding interacting with family and in-laws. For example, just because your husband doesn't say anything at first about who he wants to visit during the holidays, doesn't mean he doesn't have a preference or opinion. Get on the same page with your spouse. Then, when you agree on what you guys want, you will be able to better communicate boundaries and expectations with your extended family, especially your in-laws. I also thought Brann's discussion on how and why men and women handle relationships differently was fascinating. It helped me understand my husband a lot better, honestly. I do have one minor gripe, though. There were moments while reading the book that I had a hard time figuring out how to really apply the advice to my life. For example, at one point Brann says that certain (more aggressive...) mother-in-laws might be so used to getting their way that they need to have clear boundaries set WITH consequences. Well, I wasn't sure what those appropriate

consequences would be: the MIL can't see her grandkids? She has to go home early? I just didn't know, and I wish Brann had provided examples. Still, this book is very insightful. I enjoyed Brann's writing style and her tone. She's very kind and understanding, and even though the topic of in-laws can be a touchy subject for me, I never felt defensive while reading Brann's advice, explanations, and suggestions. Certain points could have been fleshed out a bit more, but, overall, this book turned out to be a very helpful resource. The publisher gave me a free copy of this book to review.

Daughter-in-law / Mother-in-law (DIL/MIL) relationships frequently seem doomed to have rocky patches, if not be broken entirely. Dr. Brann has written this book as a sort of sequel to her previous work, "Reluctantly Related", but focuses more specifically on the DIL/MIL relationship. She describes typical in-law relationships, and offers concrete steps for understanding and improving flawed relationships. I can definitely spot some familiar conflicts among the many examples she listed, and have faced the same challenges in my life. It was interesting to read about how the parent-child relationship changes over time (or should) and how that contributes to the potential for in-law troubles. Though my MIL is now deceased, and we never had any significant disagreements, there was from time to time a mild tug of war with her only son, my husband, in the middle. This slim volume (~160 pages) should be required reading for a couple about to marry, so that they can address potential "in law" issues in advance, and have a strategy for discussing and addressing any issues as they arise. I did find the use of character stereotypes throughout the book (Comfortable Carla, Uncertain Sara, Confidant Connie, Weird Wendy, etc.) to be mildly annoying, and felt that the author could have made her point without resorting to those alliteratively named stereotypes. I received an advance copy of the book from the publisher for my review.

I can honestly say I have not had any of the conflicts as described in this book, but maybe I was very lucky in my in-laws. Lucky also to have a sensible husband. I was gifted a copy of this book for an unbiased review, or I'd probably not have read it; I also had not read the previous book on this topic. I was aware of course that some people do struggle under sticky issues with relatives and in-laws. The case histories related here opened my eyes to a world of needy, clingy, self-obsessed people. Mothers in law wonder why they don't get to see the grandchildren. Daughters in law wonder why their husband's mother keeps undermining their household routine. On the surface these are simple matters but what are the underlying causes? Insecurity? Control freakery? Spite, fear, loneliness, simple miscommunication? The author has an MSc in psychology and a PhD in psychobiological anthropology, and being female, of course she focuses on the female half of family

relationships. She counsels people in difficulties and has probably saved some marriages. I know that when someone has an on-going, mystifying or unfamiliar life problem, just reading about similar people with similar issues can be hugely helpful. Explanations exist, issues can be talked out or solutions worked through with or without professional help. You won't be the first person in this position, nor the last. The tales can be usefully applied to other situations outside the family. For instance there is a helpful section on recognising passive-aggressive behaviour. I thought the author was too kind when she said that this is a subtle way of being unapproving; sometimes in my experience it is pure intentional spite. To me it seems that mature women have too few other concerns if they are obsessing about how the grandchildren are being reared and whether their sons still love them. The ladies may have a point, but if they go and take a degree or work on community poverty alleviation they won't need to visit or phone their children daily. And wouldn't a weekly Skype call do instead of visits? I thought that unlike in the book, most couples do consider early and jointly where they will spend special holidays - Christmas usually in Ireland where I live. Some will decide in advance to spend each year with alternate in-law families. Others will invite their parents to their new home. And others will decide that the first Christmas they spend together will be just the two of them, off skiing if needs be. Maybe Irish people are more sensible. I would have added a few topics, which may have been covered in an earlier book. In my experience they are hugely important parts of family dynamics.

**Children.** These are the most important people in a family. They are not much mentioned except as a bone of contention and with a too-brief reminder that children learn how to treat parents by example.

**Businesswomen.** How much time you have and whether the children are in day care makes a huge difference to the time you spend with other family members. Earning money is hard and takes a lot of time and mental energy.

**Illness and old age.** Aside from the guilt issues mentioned, we don't hear about a senior needing care. As educated working women marry later, they will have completed the break with parents and approach caring for someone as an adult. The women in the family always get the job of caring for any older women, even if these are not their own parents. A lady with sons should realise this and get on with her daughters in law, if she is lucky enough to have them.

**Death.** Again, the women in the family usually make arrangements for hospice care, funerals, graves and sorting/ disposing of the effects of senior family members. Be kind to your children, their spouses and your grandchildren. If you are lucky enough to have them.

**Divorce.** Marriages fall through for all kinds of reasons and a mother in law can be left in limbo, with grandchildren whom she wants to see and thus a daughter-out-law whom she needs to see but without wanting to ruin her loyal relationship to her son. If any of the issues raised by this book concern you, grab the book. There are real life examples, helpful advice, handy

work notes and witty cartoons. Otherwise, I can easily see Reluctantly Related Revisited being a source of fascination and inspiration to authors of romance, women's fiction and crime.

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