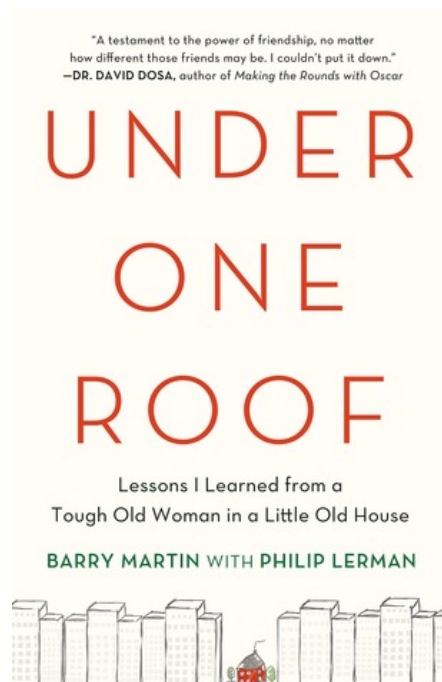




Under One Roof: Lessons I Learned from a Tough Old Woman in a Little Old House

Barry Martin , Philip Lerman

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Sometimes people aren't who you think they are.

Everyone knew what was going on in Ballard, Washington: developers were building a giant shopping mall, but a house belonging to a feisty octogenarian named Edith Wilson Macefield was in the way. They offered her a million dollars. She told them to take a hike.

Everyone knew that Barry Martin, head of the construction project, was involved in the push to get her out of the house so that the project could proceed without further delay.

Everyone was wrong.

When Barry took the job as construction supervisor for the shopping mall that was being erected around Edith's little house, he determined to make things as easy for her as he could. He didn't expect that she'd ask him to drive her to a hair appointment—but he did offer to help, after all. And it was in that one small gesture that an unlikely friendship was sparked, one that changed them both forever.

The story of Barry Martin and Edith Macefield is a tale of balance and compassion, of giving enough without giving too much, of helping our elderly loved ones through the tough times without taking away their dignity. In the end, *Under One Roof* is a tale of grace, and one from which all of us can take solace and strength. From Barry and Edith we have much to learn about love and letting go and, just possibly, about seeing through fading light to find great joy.

Under One Roof: Lessons I Learned from a Tough Old Woman in a Little Old House Details

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From Reader Review Under One Roof: Lessons I Learned from a Tough Old Woman in a Little Old House for online ebook

Bette says

Being a caregiver, I really related to so much of this story. Whether or not Edith's stories were true or made up was not important. She was a writer and who knows where her imagination could have lead her. She certainly knew how to manipulate her caregiver as so many in her position learn to do. I often wonder what will I be like if I find myself in the position of needing to be cared for. Certainly a story worth telling and much can be learned from it by the caregiver as well as the one being cared for.

Jami says

So remember that cute Disney movie, Up? It's no secret it's one of my favorites. I just love it so freaking much! Well, Apparently that was "loosely" based on this real-life story of Edith Macefield. She refused to sell her home to a construction company that was building a shopping mall, and they ended up building the mall around her little home. She lived there all through the construction for three years.

Making the story even more intriguing, the head of the project became friends with Edith. He would take her to doctor's appointments, cook her meals, and care for her as she began to decline from cancer. I tried to upload some pictures of the real house and people but I can't figure out how to do that! Curse you Goodreads!!! But, you should totally google her story and check out the pictures! It's pretty cool! During their time together, Edith would tell him wild and fantastic tales about her life that seemed straight out of the pages of a book, and about all the famous people she had rubbed elbows with. He never knew what was truth or fiction. Edith was a writer and he somewhat believed that she had made these stories up for her novels. Until he found proof after her death.

As much I loved reading this memoir, it only gets a 3 star review from me. That is mainly just because of the writing. I didn't expect this to be on par with epic novels, it's just a cute and sometimes sad story, from a man who just wanted to tell it.

Trevor Pearson says

<http://bindblottyandcajole.com/2015/0...>

Kathryn says

This was a fascinating true story about a crotchety old woman and the man who cared for her and her house was right in the middle of a large construction zone. It takes place in Ballard WA. I am familiar with the area, so that made it especially interesting. This was a great book for book club.

Carol says

What would you do? You have a new job as a construction supervisor in Seattle and your name is Barry Martin. All the land has been purchased except one tiny plot where a very small old house sits. A great big shopping mall will be built there. A stubborn woman in her eighties refuses to accept the offer to buy her house for a million dollars. Her name is Edith Wilson Macefield. She believes in a place for everything and everything in its place. She comes outside to spread birdseed on her sidewalk. Well, you go over to introduce yourself, tell what you are doing, apologize for the noise and offer your help if she ever needs anything.

That began a very unusual relationship between the two in "Under One Roof: Lessons I Learned from a Tough Old Woman in a Little Old House. Barry Marin succeeds in telling his story beautifully and you will reading about his unusual friendship and learn so much from both of them.

Miss Edith Wilson Macefield is ornery, well dressed, can swear like a lumberjack and has known so many well-known people in her life so many that it seems like fiction. In fact Barry Martin is constantly wondering are her stories true or made up. She escaped from a Nazi prison camp and she taught a dance to Mickey Rooney and that is just a tiny glimpse of her experiences... Even though her stories are startling and diverse, the true value of this book is that of friendship and learning how to treat seniors.

I hope that you will read this book, I don't see how it is possible that you will be disappointed, and it is a gem. I recommend it to all people who have parents who are alive or are caregivers and to all who want to read a fantastic story.

I received this book as a win from FirstReads but that in no way influenced my thoughts and feelings in this review.

Megan says

This book was a nice story about figuring out what is important, like your home, like people you love. It is a sweet story, genuine and kind. I still had a lot of questions at the end about what happened, and what it really meant. Edith told a lot of amazing stories about her life, stories that would be easy enough to research and verify to help create a deeper picture of who she was. I found myself skimming the pages that detailed all the things Barry did for her, I could tell he was a kind man who meant well, I didn't need further proof of that. But Edith! I felt a little gypped. Escaped from Dachau? Secretly married to Richard Tauber? Even if these stories were not true, there is a story here. I was so disappointed that I did not get to read it, but instead was persuaded that it was an amazing thing that she didn't move out for a million dollars. So what? It seems lots of people are hitching to her star; there is a festival in her name and tattoos of her house. When "Up" premiered Pixar came and attached balloons to her home. I have a feeling she would not give a damn about any of that. She wanted to stay in her house because it was a home. A million dollars cannot buy you that.

Vernette Thompson says

Captivating from page one!

I loved this book! Edith reminded me of my own mother. My father, like Barry 's, had Alzheimer's so I found myself shedding a tear or two. I had to remind myself from time to time I was reading a true story as it was written so beautifully. Like Barry, I was the main caregiver for my parents so this book spoke to me on many levels!

Jeanette says

For anyone who was curious about the contractor who befriended the woman who refused to move when they built the Ballard Trader Joe's around her. A touching story I didn't know even though I worked across the street!

Dundee Library says

This is a lovely, straightforward book about caring for the elderly we love.

Barry Martin is a construction foreman, and the mall project that he signed on for has one tough old woman, Edith, still living on the property. The developers have offered her over a million dollars for her small home, and she has refused. They decide to go forward with the project and just build the mall around her home.

Over time, Barry befriends the persnickety Edith and they become friends. When Edith's health starts to fail and Barry discovers that there is no one in her life to care for her, he becomes her primary caretaker.

This is a true story, one that can probably still be youtubed as it was on national news.

What drew me in was Barry's honesty and simple, down-home voice. This isn't a book that will make you weep with its reflections about death and life or the beauty of its language. Instead, it's a man's attempt to make sense out of the odd friendship that formed between he and Edith, who she really was, and why he stayed with her until the end.

It's his voice that also keeps it from becoming a Hallmark movie - all mush and sentimentality with no substance. Rather, Barry is honest about the times he wants to quit, the times he struggles with Edith's obstinance and deceptions, and he makes no suggestion that what he did was in any way unusual or extraordinary. Instead, he just sees it as the right thing to do, and that is what he did - nothing special in his mind.

Overall, a good read about a good man and a lively, complicated woman.

Danny says

I picked this up at the thrift store. The dust jacket drew me in and the story looked reasonably interesting. The writing is not fantastic but I didn't mind it because it was just like listening to a friend tell you a really long story. I loved how honest it seems to be. I'm glad Martin didn't leave out the bad. I've watched others around me be care givers and it looks HARD and I think leaving out those dark moments would have been a disservice to Barry, Edith, and care givers everywhere. I also loved the hard learned lesson he shared of not treating elderly like they are children. I hope to keep that little tidbit of knowledge if/when I'm in the care

giver position.

I know one of the points of the story is it didn't matter if Edith's stories were true or not....but I'm itching to know. :) I hope someone decides to take up the task of researching her life and putting together a biography.

Chelsea says

Barry is building a shopping mall. Edith Macefield's house is in the way. His company offers her big bucks to move and she tells them to go to hell. This is a story about a man with a big heart. A story about a friendship that changes both of their lives forever.....and yes...I cried quite a bit while reading this touching story.

Lynne Spreen says

I loved this book. Could not put it down. It's a memoir, the story of an unlikely friendship between the superintendent of a massive construction project and the old woman who refuses to sell her tiny house that sits in the way of the project.

The superintendent, Barry, a likable man of fifty, meets Edith (she's in her early 80s) when he begins the project. On his first day, he goes around (what remains of) the neighborhood, introducing himself to the people who'll be impacted by the dust and noise. One day she calls his cell to say she needs a ride to her hairdresser, and Barry obliges.

Over the next three years, as she declines, he steps in, doing more and more for her (this is made at least somewhat more manageable by the fact that his office trailer is thirty feet from her door.) From making her breakfast and taking her to doctor appointments, he progresses to cooking all her meals and cleaning up after her when she falls and has accidents. Finally, he ends up shepherding her through her last days, fulfilling his promise to help her die at home rather than in "a facility," as she calls it.

There's so much in this story to love. Edith herself in her youth was an almost mythically heroic figure, and even now she's fiercely independent and a handful; Barry is the kind of guy you'd want for a son, dad, brother, but at times he blows his top trying to care for her; and his family and coworkers are all stand-up people. There are lessons aplenty in this book, which is well-written, well-paced, and well-edited. If you'll bear with me, I'd enjoy sharing a couple of passages with you.

On old people needing some autonomy and independence as they wane: When Edith finally allowed her condition to be diagnosed, although it was dire, she seemed happier, and Barry realized it was because "...now she was the boss again. Chemo? Radiation? Surgery? If nothing else, she got to make the decisions, the big, big decisions. That is the one thing that diminishes as you get older - and the one thing that those of us who help out need to remember. They've spent their lives making enormous decisions about their own destiny, and the destinies of others...So to be given, one last time, the power over life and death...must be a very deeply reassuring feeling. More reassuring than life itself, I guess."

On the need to stand up to doctors and the health care industry: Barry says, "I handed the prescription to the girl behind the counter with a little sense of pride, like I was showing off a report card full of A's...I guess I've always been a little feisty when it comes to doctors, but I'd never had a real reason to confront one before. What do people do when there's no one to be an advocate for them?...It's not enough (when you're a caregiver) just to show up. You have to show up ready to fight."

I cried plenty toward the end of this book, which, although it's non-fiction, has a beautiful character arc. Barry learns about how to work with and respect the independence of older people just in time to help his own dad deal with impending Alzheimer's, and for this, he is so grateful to Edith. And for this book, I am grateful to the author.

Jessica Anne says

I love this.

About three days a week, I drive past Edith's old place on my way to work in Ballard. The house is so small and stripped that I barely ever remember to see it. I got to talking with my co-worker about the house one day, and we looked at some articles online. It took half an hour before we read any mention of "the building superintendent" and how he and Edith were friends. It took even longer to find out that the guy's name was Barry Martin, and that he'd cook dinner for Edith every night. Then longer still to find mention of this book.

So much of the media, even now, seven years after her death, is about the house and what people think it represents--rather than Edith. But Barry Martin's book tells simply and beautifully the story of Edith's life (in a manner a heck of a lot shorter than her 1000 page self-published manuscript). Thanks for that.

steph says

So a month or so ago I stumbled across a news article about Edith's house (it is up for sale AGAIN) and the article briefly mentioned the history of Edith and her house in regards to the construction project that surrounded it and attempted to buy it off of her. I was intrigued by the plot line (*UP* is my favorite Pixar movie from the past decade) and I did some more searching online until I found out that a book was written by the head constructor of that project regarding his time with Edith, the owner of the house. So I went ahead and put a copy of this book on hold and waited for it to come in.

And can I just say, I'm so glad I did. When I picked up this book and started reading I knew I was going to like Edith -this strong, stubborn 84 year old woman who just wants to stay in the house that she has been at the last 50 odd years, construction and giant malls be damned. And I did grow to like Edith and her past is very, very interesting. But oh man, Barry. The head construction guy and author of this book, Barry is the best and stole my heart.

He doesn't minx words about how he just sort of stumbled into this relationship with Edith and how it transformed from small chats over her fence to taking Edith to her hair and doctor appointments to staying over most of the time especially during her last year of life.

Barry talks about how he felt guilty for being away from his family to take care of this stubborn old lady but at the same time his wife and kids supported his decision to help her and he was a better man for their support. He talks about how Edith's stance to stay at her house made her a pillar in the community when the reality was that Edith didn't do it for the press or coverage. She did it because the house was her home and she wanted to stay in her home and Barry understood that and in turn made the reader understand that. Basically this book made me fall in love with Barry and Edith and I love that she helped him as much as he helped her.

I'd recommend this book if you want to read a feel good true life story about people helping others. Or you

you don't, you could just watch *UP*. Whatever floats your boat. But Edith was a pretty spectacular individual and I enjoyed reading about her unusual life and Barry is a really good, salt of the earth type of guy you don't often see in literature. So my recommendation is to read the book if you can.

Candy says

A nice feel good story, but it could have been way shorter.
