



Crash Test Girl: An Unlikely Experiment in Using the Scientific Method to Answer Life's Toughest Questions

Kari Byron

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Kari Byron—former host of the wildly popular, iconic cult classic *MythBusters*—shows how to crash test your way through life, no lab coat required.

Kari Byron's story hasn't been a straight line. She started out as a broke artist living in San Francisco, writing poems on a crowded bus on the way to one of her three jobs. Many curve balls, unexpected twists, and yes, literal and figurative explosions later, and she's one of the world's most respected women in science entertainment, blowing stuff up on national television and getting paid for it! In *Crash Test Girl*, Kari reveals her fascinating life story on the set of *MythBusters* and beyond. With her signature gusto and roll-up-your-sleeves enthusiasm, she invites readers behind the duct tape and the dynamite, to the unlikely friendships and low-budget sets that turned a crazy idea into a famously inventive show with a rabid fanbase.

The truth is, *MythBusters* was never meant to be a science show. But attaching a rocket to a car, riding a motorcycle on water, or lighting 500 pounds of coffee creamer on fire requires a decent understanding of chemistry, physics, and engineering. Thus, the cast and crew brought in the scientific method to work through each problem: Question. Hypothesize. Analyze. Experiment. Conclude. And as Kari came to learn in her own life, not only is the scientific method the best approach for busting myths, it's also the perfect tool for solving everyday issues, including:

Career · Love · Creativity · Setbacks · Money · Sexuality · Depression · Bravery

Crash Test Girl reminds us that science is for everyone, as long as you're willing to strap in, put on your safety goggles, hit a few walls, and learn from the results. Using a combination of methodical experimentation and unconventional creativity, you'll come to the most important conclusion of all: In life, sometimes you crash and burn, but you can always crash and learn.

Crash Test Girl: An Unlikely Experiment in Using the Scientific Method to Answer Life's Toughest Questions Details

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From Reader Review Crash Test Girl: An Unlikely Experiment in Using the Scientific Method to Answer Life's Toughest Questions for online ebook

Caitlin says

I adored Mythbusters from its inception. Watched and rewatched, bought merchandise, watched again. So when I heard, as the show broke up, that behind the scenes had been ugly, I was saddened. And greatly curious to see what Kari Byron had to say.

This boom isn't really about Mythbusters, but more about Kari's approach to life. Lessons learned on love, depression, and creativity (to give three examples) each make up a chapter, with text box asides and drawings scattered throughout. Mythbusters does play a large part in the book, just as it did in Kari's life.

Fans of the show will find something in here, but fans of finding your own way, of strength and adaptability, will find more.

Jeff Kalac says

Generally speaking, I tend to love books like Kari Byron's "Crash Test Girl." Specifically about this book, I found myself not wanting it to end. But end it had to, and this is a fast read (even if my time demanded that I read it in sips). Fortunately, it packs quite a punch.

My exposure to Ms. Bryon began at the same place as I imagine that it did for most of you: Discovery Channel's "Mythbusters." It was hard watching that show without the feeling that I was hanging out with the build team while also learning from them; their personal chemistry was as undeniable as it was engaging. Later in life I had a daughter, and it occurred to me that as she watched old reruns of "Mythbusters" with me, she was far more fixated on anything involving Kari than she was on anything else. I hadn't thought much about it before, but I realized what a powerful role model Ms. Byron was to her. When I heard about this book's release, I instantly wanted it.

Framed around Kari's application of the scientific method for solving life's challenges, this novel serves not so much as an autobiography as it does a peek into Ms. Byron's mind and how she analyses the goings-on around her. There's a great deal of insight as to her process of self-discovery. This book is a peek behind the curtain of a person who for so many of us was just another face on that flickering box. Additionally, it's a display that Ms. Byron knows that her celebrity status gives her a degree of influence within her fan base, and true to her image, she wishes to do something positive with it. She succeeds.

Judging from some of the comments I've read from others, some of you may be concerned about feminist messages being force-fed to you. This book is for you especially. The expectations of women in the workforce are very different, and it would be insincere for Ms. Byron to write something like this without mentioning it. Ms. Byron handles these topics with tact as well as humor, focusing on her own approach and attitudes toward these things. While pulling back the blanket and revealing it for what it is, her goal is to enlighten rather than inflict guilt: these are the things she's seen, this is how they made her feel, and this is how she dealt with them. If her approach causes you discomfort, it's your responsibility to figure out why.

For the rest of us, I can only say that I recommend "Crash Test Girl" very highly. You've seen her. You

know who she is and what she does. After reading this work, you'll feel as if you've met her. You'll be happy to have made her acquaintance.

Julian Stanley says

It's an entertaining glimpse into the life and history of the deeply intricate Kari Byron. For me, this book was solely for entertainment, but I was occasionally compelled to consider specific episodes in my own history from different, more productive, perspectives.

Where was this book when I was 19? For inspiration and life advice, this book is suitable for young adults who have no clue how to live their life. It targets a female audience, but, in truth, any young adult or person stuck in deep crises can potentially gain from this book. It's this potentiality that ultimately bumped it up from three to four stars for me.

It's easy to read which facilitates her messages getting through to the reader (minimal chaff). As a fun bonus, her drawings and anecdotes always made me smile. :)

Carrie ♠ says

Will come back to add review.

Cloak88 says

4.5 stars for this excellent biography

Valerie says

In this book Kari proposes a framework for applying scientific-method concepts to various aspects of life, providing examples from her own experiences to show how she made her way by experimenting and learning from the results. While some of the advice was not particularly novel to a reader nearly two decades into her career, Kari is an insightful and delightful author, and I especially appreciated the chapters on bravery, depression, and setbacks. The format of the book was very engaging and made for a very fun and quick read. If you're expecting a *MythBusters* tell-all, this book may disappoint you; but while there's not much in the way of gossip, there are tales from the set in nearly every chapter, with lots of love expressed for her fellow Build Team members as well as Jamie Hyneman.

I wish I'd had a mentor like Kari--or at least a book like this to read--twenty years ago! Definitely recommended for young women as they near or enter adulthood, but there's something in this book for anyone at any age.

Michelle Bartley says

I stumbled upon this book and immediately decided to listen to the audiobook since I love and miss Mythbusters. I was expecting funny stories about Kari Byron and inside details about Mythbusters. There was plenty of that, but there was so much more. Kari Byron welded her humorous personal stories with darker ones, talking about important issues such as alcohol and depression. She gave phenomenal career advice for women about things such as networking and taking risk. Would have given it five stars, but the internet lingo and hashtags were just a bit much...

Charlotte Jones says

As a huge fan of Mythbusters, when I saw Kari tweet about the release of this book I just had to pick it up. I listened to this one on audiobook narrated by the author.

I know Kari Byron as one of the presenters on Mythbusters and there were some great stories about her time on the show, especially stories of being the only woman in a male dominated field. As well as this, there were stories of Kari looking back on her life and giving inspirational advice based on the scientific methods used on the show. I really enjoyed this format. I'm not usually someone who enjoys self-help style books but this had enough substance behind it for it to be inspirational for me, particularly the chapter about depression.

I wouldn't say that this is for everyone but if you are a fan of Mythbusters and of Kari, you'll enjoy this book.

Brian's Book Blog says

A Great Book For Young Women

I know that I am by far not the target audience for this book but I still enjoyed it. I was a huge Mythbusters fan and I did enjoy White Rabbit Project so when I saw that Kari was writing a book I had to have it. When I saw that she was releasing an audiobook and narrating it herself I was even more excited.

Crash Test Girl gives life lessons from a woman who's "crash tested" her way through life's major and minor decisions. It is full of advice on how to be a strong and modern woman in these new times and how to stand up for yourself in both life and at work. Being a feminist I loved the advice that she is giving young women out there.

I did find a lot of her backstory interesting. I didn't realize how little I knew about her until I got about 2 hours into this book. She is a fascinating study in doing things her way and crashing into the right decision (or finding out its the wrong one and owning it).

I knew when I watched Mythbusters that Kari being part of the show was important, but as a male I wasn't sure just how important. I'm glad that someone convinced her to write a book and I hope that teachers and parents are smart enough to let their students and daughters check this book out. I think they'll enjoy it and learn to be stronger and more well-rounded women for it.

Talia Smart says

Reading Kari Byron's *Crash Test Girl* is like having a conversation with a trusted friend. Warm, funny, and full of wisdom, this memoir/self-help guide uses the clever format of experimentation, a nod to Byron's time on the Discovery Channel show *MythBusters*.

Each chapter focuses on an aspect of Byron's life, ranging from love to money to creativity, and begins with a related anecdote, often from the *MythBusters* shop. Then Byron delves into her personal history, recounting episodes from her teenage years, 20s adventures, or love life and calling them "crash tests," "hypotheses," and "experiments." This structure could easily disrupt the narrative, but it does the opposite, keeping the theme of each chapter at the center of attention and reminding the reader of Byron's science-based perspective.

Despite this being her first outing into a written artistic form, Byron's voice is compelling and very personable. She writes like I imagine she talks—the language is accessible but full of insight. I was pleasantly surprised by the fact that I didn't want to put this book down! I learned so much about Byron's life and feel inspired to go out into the world and experiment with life a little bit!

Brad McKenna says

This should be on the Girls Who Code reading list. If there isn't such a reading list, this should be among the first chosen.

I took a break from one type of oppression (racism) to read about another type of oppression (sexism). Kari is a powerful woman, no scratch that, she's a powerful person. The crap she had to deal with being a women on not just a TV show but a scientific TV show was disheartening. While the book doesn't focus on just that, it's my biggest takeaway. Mythbusters is one of my all-time favorite shows and it was fascinating to see what made one of the co-hosts tick.

Hers has not been a life rife with opportunities. She made her fair share of mistakes but she didn't shy away from owning them. This book is just another opportunity for her. This time, in addition to sharing some behind the scenes stuff on Mythbusters, she reveals her experiences with many things, including some things that are (mistakenly) seen as character flaws, particularly depression and failure. She is strikingly honest about her life and is so because she hopes sharing her struggles will help others. That's freaking fantastic.

Great read.

Liz says

Sweet, endearing, and wonderful. As a mother and a woman in science and education, I have an incredible amount of respect and feels for Kari.

Kat says

This book is definitely written with a female audience in mind, however I do think men would enjoy reading it, especially fans of Kari's. However I do think you would have to be a fan of Kari's or at least of Mythbusters, to get something from this book. Personally I am a huge fan of Kari and loved this book.

At first I was a little apprehensive about the premise of the book, wondering if the half self-help, half memoir style of the book was a gimmick to be a little different and I was wondering how it would quite work. My fears were relieved almost straight away. The structure of the book quite simply works as a great way to tell Kari's story. The book is very well-written and is very engaging and gives great advice while never feeling sententious. One of the reasons the book is so amazing is that Kari is very honest throughout. After reading this book it you feel like you really know about Kari and who she is (as well as some behind the scenes Mythbusters gossip!). Definitely a book I will return to in the future.

Justin Sylvia says

Kari Byron.. Artist, Mom, MythBusters Cast Member, Wife, etc. I wasn't sure what to expect going into this book. I guess I was kind of hoping that it would kind of be a stereotypical, by the book type. However, what I got was a little bit different. That's not to say that I didn't like it, because I did & if I could give it 3.5 stars I would. I feel like a good audience for this book, would be the young, aspiring, individualistic type of young woman who could use a good standard bearer for accomplishing stuff in largely male dominated jobs. I did enjoy the book, & I feel like this is a loong shot, but it'd be nice if she sooner or later did a second book. There were times where a chapter topic like the one about her feminine sexuality, or her adventures through raising her first child. At other times, I enjoyed her reminiscing about her time on Mythbusters & her interaction with cast & crew. Again, I feel like a 3.5 star rating is my general rating, and I HOPE that some young person ?, or not finds some encouragement & determination from this empowering from such a woman as Kari Byron

Melissa says

~Disclaimer I received this book for free and quotes/page numbers are from the advanced reading copy~

In the books own words:

"If you're a professional scientist reading this, great! If you're a curious person who loves the idea of dissecting what went wrong and deciding how you might do things better next time, welcome! The brilliance of the scientific method is that it is for everyone. Seriously, everyone. The scientific method can become a guiding light for you, as it is for me, and I'm excited to show you how I did it." (p. 4)

What can you expect to read in this book:

From there the memoir starts. Kari touches on her career prior to joining Mythbusters and the steps that lead to her becoming part of the crew. From there she leaps into her love life: her first boyfriend, the failed dating and finally Paul her husband. Moving on from there we look at money via her childhood of financial hardship, after college days and finally to actually making good money in reality TV. From there she talks about the role of friendship, style, alcohol, sexuality, depression, creativity, setbacks and bravery have had on her life. These chapters have many positive messages within them and at some times veer into self-help

territory.

Each section is told in a format Question, Hypothesis, Experiment, Analysis and finally Conclusion (with occasional Crash Test segments thrown in). The end of each chapter is completed with sketches.

If you love Mythbusters or are a fan of Kari Byron this is a great purchase. For everyone else...read it if it sounds interesting and skip it if it doesn't.
