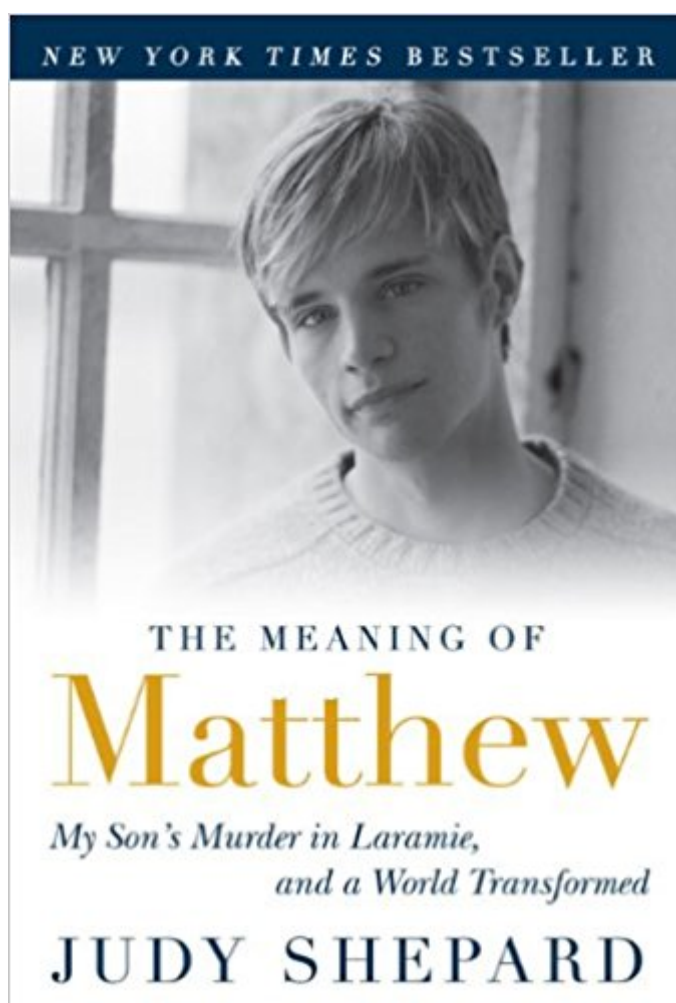


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The Meaning Of Matthew: My Son's Murder In Laramie, And A World Transformed



Synopsis

"A courageous, eloquent, and devoted mother...gives us all a greater understanding of Matthew and the larger meaning of his life." -Senator Edward M. Kennedy Today, Matthew Shepard is synonymous with gay rights, but until 1998, he was just Judy Shepard's son. In *The Meaning of Matthew*, Judy Shepard confides how she handled her crippling loss in the public eye, the vigils and protests held by strangers in her son's name, and ultimately how she and her husband gained the courage to help prosecutors convict her son's murderers. Heart-wrenchingly honest, *The Meaning of Matthew* is an unforgettable and inspiring story, chronicling one ordinary woman's struggle to cope with the unthinkable.

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Customer Reviews

"A courageous, eloquent, and devoted mother...gives us all a greater understanding of Matthew and the larger meaning of his life." -Senator Edward M. Kennedy "Gives us a chance to know the young man whose brutal death started a movement that inspired the enactment of the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Law. Raw, honest and real, with some surprising new details never before published." -Kathi Isserman, *Curve Magazine* "Shepard writes in a quiet, graceful voice about love, acceptance, and having a hole in one's heart the size of a missing child. While Matthew became a national symbol for homophobic victimization, for Judy Shepard it is the story of a mother and the tragic loss of her son." -Terri Schlichenmeyer, *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*

JUDY SHEPARD is cofounder of the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which is dedicated to social justice, diversity awareness and education, and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Shepard speaks across the country on behalf of the foundation.

It was a horrific turn of events, but the world ended up better for it. Sometimes we have to lose a few in order for things to get better...I wish it didn't have to be that way. Had Matthew lived, his life would have gotten so much better. We're not in the 90s anymore. He'd be proud of the way the world has shaped up. We still have a long way to go but we're getting there slowly but surely. His killers were a product of society at that time. Judy Shepard is a remarkable woman. She tells it like it happened, and unselfishly. I was close to tears a few times when I read this book on a flight from L.A. to Washington DC one afternoon. I liked how Judy states that when she speaks publicly, she gets the audience to think about Matthew, and not herself. I hope she continues talking to audiences for a long time to come. She could easily have withdrawn from life, but she used the lessons of the tragedy to make the world a better place. I wish I'd known Matthew. He was apparently a good conversationalist and cared about other people. I hope I meet him someday in the great beyond.

... to a world known icon, Judy Shepard has become synonymous with words like activist, equal rights, and legacy. There are many of us who idolize this woman, and even, dare I say, put her on a pedestal for her endless work in this area. However, the Judy Shepard in her new book, "The Meaning of Matthew" My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed", is a simple mother, telling the wonderful story of her son's life, and the journey his death set her on afterwards. One of the marvelous surprises in this book of surprises is Judy's humbleness and straightforwardness. Coming from the west, growing up in Wyoming herself, Judy has an understanding of the land and the people there that permeates this wonderful book. She met and married her husband Dennis, and then proceeded to have Matthew, which turned out to be a complicated birth and early few weeks of life. Throughout this book, Judy shares little stories and insights into Matthew's character that truly humanize this now civil rights icon. This is a mother, writing about her son, with love. But it's honest. Judy doesn't hold back, when recounting her first suspicions about her son's homosexuality, when recounting some of his faults and foibles, and her own doubts as a mother. Somehow, throughout the book, she manages to maintain her composure, even when getting to the fateful, horrible nights and lingering days while Matthew barely clung to life. Read those chapters with Kleenex nearby. Even the hardest hearted of us will be fighting back tears. However, I must say, I don't feel for a second that Judy wants us to feel sorry for her, or slip into a maudlin remembrance

of her son. I truly believe, as the book wraps up for us, that she is ultimately inspiring us to action. This book serves as a clarion call for those who wish for others to do the difficult work of equal rights to wake up and get involved; even in little ways, the littlest act can and does make a difference. From humble beginnings as a wife and mother, to world known activist, you leave the book admiring her and her family for the work they've done to make this world as better place for everyone. But in reality, this marvelous read is a mother's memories of her son, and this book serves as a monument to this boy, whom the country never met, but now knows well. Thank you Judy.

It's always painful to read on how Judy penned down the agony which his son, Matt, had suffered, be it from the rape in Morocco or the ruthless attack that cost his life in Laramie, Wyoming. For me, personally, this is probably the reason why I couldn't finish the book quickly which I bought some time ago, reading the book already made me feel depressed, most notably the gruesome details on how Matt was being intimidated. Can you imagine the pain his family had endured after losing him? However, one must note that the more devilish theme here is the HATE people have on the minorities. Described in the book on p. 262, "we have become a SIC society: silent, indifferent and complacent." Thus, Judy hopes that people can really focus on how to improve the issues of pushing for LGBTQ rights and accepting them. We can start to question ourselves on what we could do? I'm sure that Matthew would become a meaningful figure in the history of gay rights movement, joined by Bobby Griffith and the Stone Wall incident. We'd miss you, Matt.

I enjoyed the story of Matt, my heart went out to his family. Mostly I have a better understanding of acceptance of others. I have never judged others, but now my eyes are opened to look for others who might need help. God say to seek others and if one person would of stopped to help, or question . We might have had a different outcome. I will never forget this story, it touch my heart.

Judy Shepard has done a great service to all of us, in telling Matt's story, and how she and her family responded to the worst possible event that a mother could ever imagine. I read this book when it came out a couple of years ago, and now, I am reading it again, and truly inspired. Such unconditional love here.

Very very moving and lovely in the affectionate way that Mrs. S. Wrote about her son. I admire this family for the way they have behaved under unthinkable circumstances. I pray that no one should ever suffer such cruelty again. A good read and a necessary one.

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