



Lean On Me: Finding Intentional, Vulnerable, and Consistent Community

Anne Marie Miller

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"Reading this gut-honest book will be like cold water to your parched soul." —**Lysa TerKeurst**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Best Yes*

"Anne's story is a disturbingly searching, deeply convicting, and delightfully arousing call to community, the kind that only Jesus makes possible. Read it and you'll want to relate as perhaps you've never related before, with both vulnerability and commitment. Leave safe relating behind, and connect with healing power." —**Dr. Larry Crabb**, best-selling author of *Connecting*

Life has a way of throwing unexpected obstacles in our path, tripping us up, and bringing us to our knees. When these crises hit, who do you call? Who do you lean on? Anne Marie Miller found herself in one of those valleys on the floor of a hotel bathroom while on a business trip. Months of stress accumulated and took its toll. In a moment of desperation, she picked up the phone and called a friend for guidance. That simple phone call was the first step in a transforming journey of evaluating what community truly meant and looked like in her life.

We live in a world and a generation where the word “community” is often discussed. But how genuine and authentic are your relationships *really*? Anne Marie noticed an important tension all of us must recognize in order to have life-giving friendships: “We desperately want to belong yet at the same time, we yearn for independence.”

In *Lean On Me*, Anne Marie Miller takes us along as she sets out to dig below the superficial and explore what choices are necessary to find intentional, vulnerable, and consistent community. Jesus was passionate about truth-speaking relationships. And with Anne Marie’s narrative and practical insights interwoven together, you will feel more equipped in your quest for these types of relationships as you seek people to lean on and as you pour love into those around you.

Lean On Me: Finding Intentional, Vulnerable, and Consistent Community Details

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From Reader Review Lean On Me: Finding Intentional, Vulnerable, and Consistent Community for online ebook

Julius McCarter says

Anne Marie Miller's *Lean on Me* is a follow-up to her 2010 spiritual memoir, *Permission to Speak Freely*. In *Lean on Me*, she tells the story of her continued spiritual healing, following her painful divorce, as well as from her previous trauma.

Lean on Me highlights the value of a healthy Christian community. She starts by presenting four categories of relationships with others: Not vulnerable and not committed, vulnerable and not committed, committed but not vulnerable, and committed and vulnerable. And for each category, she provides actual stories to illustrate genuine Christian community.

"In writing *Lean on Me*, it's my desire to show you that whatever course you find yourself on, you are not alone, you need God, and you need others." The reader's guide and resources at the end of the book provide valuable guidance for growing genuine Christian communities.

This book is a must-have for pastors and those that care about our churches.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the BookLook Bloggers book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Denise says

This book is a narrative, rather than a how to. But relationships don't fit neatly into a checklist, so the format flows with her story of redemption and discovering community. I don't have neat takeaways. I do have hope that intentionality and commitment will bring what my heart is looking for in friendships.

Joe Sewell says

Ouch. Ouch! OUCH!

Wow, this was one of the toughest books I have ever read yet managed to finish. I've communicated with the author before, during, and after the events detailed herein. I also went through similar, but distinctly different, events, yet my story has not found its happy ending. I'm still married, but I still long for relief, not the kind of mercy Miller discovered. I confess to feeling a bit envious. I still have difficulty comprehending how this Christian form of "accountability" can be healthy for the one not dealing with addiction or other major issue, as the term has always carried the accusing finger of blame.

The book shows well how one person had to dig through the devastation life can bring and came out well on

the other side. Like a Hallmark or Lifetime movie, though, the resolution still eludes some of us, and the pain remains.

Leigh Kramer says

While the title made me think this book might offer a more big picture look at community, it's really a memoir and a likable one at that. Miller does include some information and research related to friendship and community in the early chapters and the last chapter might have been better served toward the beginning to set the tone. Miller's story is so uniquely hers that the reader must read it as such, instead of trying to glean insights about community. The insights are there but they will not necessarily be easy to replicate. Still, I do think this is worth reading because of the storytelling and because of the vision Miller paints of her community. Also, I loved seeing favorite Nashville and Quad City haunts pop up in the narrative.

Kaitlyn Bouchillon says

The title says it best - this book is Anne's story of finding community that is real and honest and continues to show up even when it isn't easy or convenient. To be honest, the book is not what I expected - yet I couldn't stop myself from finishing it. I simply had to know the rest of her story. If you have wounds from community or friendship, this book is a good source of encouragement that although community may wound, it sure does heal.

Amy E Patton says

A tender and raw account of how Anne Marie Miller found community through the choice to enter both vulnerable and committed. This look at how true intimacy is developed in community through her story is threaded with brokenness, surrender, grace, and most of all love. While not a how to manual, *Lean On Me*, certainly lays a path on which others can follow.

Jessica Higgins says

A story of what to do when you find yourself all alone, lower than you could have imagined. Do you stay in that place of lonely despair or do you climb out and find the community that God has provided for moments such as this?

Just when things seem to be going great, life will inadvertently through you a curve ball. What do you do when these unexpected obstacles find their way into your path? Anne Marie Miller opens up about how she found herself in one of these situations and how she was able to rise above the hardships thrown her way and come out the other side a new and better person.

To me, this book was different than most non-fiction I have read. For one, it was good. I found myself turning page after page wanting to hear what she had to say next. So many of the points hit home and rang true in hit home in more than one way. It is so easy to isolate ourselves when things are going bad, but that is

when we need community with those around us the most. I find the words used within this book even more compelling as I find myself on the journey of becoming a writer also. It is a profession can leave you lonely and give you the excuse to stay shut up, closed in, and closed off from society. Never a good thing. Even if you don't want to be the life of the party, it is still incredibly important to surround ourselves with at least a few close friends. Ones that will be there for you when you need someone to talk, but it is also important to surround ourselves with people that will come to you and tell you when you are not making good decisions and help lead you down the right path.

The thing I liked best about this book was the way Anne Marie Miller poured her heart and soul onto each and every page. She wasn't afraid to bare those blemishes within herself and show the mistakes she made. If it weren't for those mistakes she wouldn't be able to say she is in a good place and can help lead others. It felt real. It wasn't just a story. It was a real story with real people, real problems and real solutions. Those solutions might not have come right away or been in the form they were asked for but in the end it was exactly as God planed. And after all, his plans are always better than ours.

Elisabeth says

I have a hard time rating memoirs. I don't wish to discredit the author's experiences, but the book just didn't resonate with me like I wanted. I was expecting more of a guide on how to find intentional, vulnerable, authentic community, not just the author's experience creating one. Aside from the gross theological differences, there are still some gems of truth to pull out of this memoir and I'm glad I read it.

Beth-Anne says

This is an incredible book. The first thing that clued me in was that I had to put down this book and I was eager to go back to it. This is not unusual for a fiction story but for a non-fiction, non-story book this was unusual. And I could sit for hours and read it. I just soaked in each chapter. Underlining and marking up the words as they spoke to me. Anne Marie Miller draws the reader into her book with candid language that will stir the heart.

She tells her own heart in this book and in return I felt that my heart was open and honest in my need for community and my own conversation with God. There were many times that I felt like I was reading what my own heart has said.

Anne Marie Miller not only discusses the need for our commitment and vulnerability to others but also with God. Both aspects of life are vital. She shares truth over and over again that will challenge you and help you on the journey to intentional, vulnerable, and consistent community with God and others.

I will be re-reading this again to soak up the words and begin to really apply them to my community. There is also a study guide in the back for further study which I will be using my second time around. This is a book to read, and re-read, and apply each time.

This is the first work of Anne Marie Miller that I have read, but I can guarantee that it won't be the last. I have already put her other books on my "Wish List."

I received this book free from BookLookBloggers in exchange for my honest review.

Ioana says

What I really loved about this book - *Lean on me* - is the lack of "how-to". It is a memoir in which the author speaks pretty openly about aspects relevant to the topic, which I admired. I knew some things about the author, Anne Marie Miller, and the things she went through, but this was a bit more detailed and it was useful in creating the context, and understanding why community and close relationships are that important.

I personally don't think this is a book that brings a revolutionary aspect to the "why do we need community" question. However, I think it helps the reader understand one person's point of view coming from a personal experience.

The way in which the author approached her situation, where she realised that something has got to change, and this all led to her moving across the country a few times.. yeah, I want that. But what this made me realise is that roots are not always physical. I appreciated her openness towards the group of mentors that were to guide her. Also, her willingness to guard herself from the "bad" community AKA those who wouldn't necessarily help her grow - to be appreciated.

This is probably not a nice thing to say, especially as a Christian, but I appreciated her not throwing a bunch of Bible verses into the book. I know them all. This is not the first book on community that I've read. I know the verses. I liked the effect of the Bible passages in her life better, to tell you the truth. I believe those were a major fact in her coming out of that dark period.

Probably more than this being a book on community and its importance, it is a book on how community actually helps one's brokenness and the feeling of lost that inevitably are to appear in everyone's life, even for the briefest of moments.

I knew I liked this book when after I started it, I didn't dread going back to the "community book". That's not my favourite topic, but this was not the point with this book. I was actually eager to read more. It must be the memoir aspect of the book. If I sound like a curious lady, I am afraid I don't know how to defend myself.

All in all, I appreciated the honesty (the vodka and Coke moment? pretty honest) and the willingness to write about it. I also liked the style. I've previously read one of Miller's books, *Permission to Speak Freely*, and I also enjoyed that. She has a poetic kind of writing which draws the reader into the book, but this is probably something not everyone enjoys.

It's a good book and it's worth the time and money.

I was offered a free copy of this book by Thomas Nelson--W Publishing through NetGalley in exchange for my honest opinion of the book. All thoughts expressed here are my own.

Faith says

"Oh no," you may be thinking, "Not another book about that ubiquitous buzzword: community!"

Oh yes. And we need this book precisely because the author admits that community is a buzzword, the kind that sizzles a lot and promises a juicy steak. You smack into the idea of ideal community everywhere, but the genuine article is rarer than rubies.

We want community- we long to be seen, heard, loved, guided and included.

But then again, what if community turned out to be stifling, oppressive, intrusive, and demanding?

As Anne Marie knows, the desire to be embraced and the need for independence wage war within us.

So how do we integrate? How do we share ourselves with others, how do we trust our hearts to others?

"Talk with your doctor about today, and see if community is right for you." Only, you can't prescribe a daily dose of it.

Community doesn't come in a bottle, even if it is part of our cure.

Lean on Me approaches the idea of community in a unique way, through memoir.

Anne Marie tells us about the darkest months in her own life, when desperation drove her to make an SOS call- for community.

She sought to build a team of friends because she knew she needed them, and she got far more than she ever imagined.

She found people who reminded her over and over that her identity is in Christ.

She found people who based their unity with her on that same identity.

She found people who understood her current circumstances and helped her look toward hope.

She found people who spoke the truth and encouraged her own bold honesty.

She learned about giving and receiving love and care.

And by telling us her story, the particulars of times and places and people, she hopes we'll begin to call out for our own community.

And because it's a memoir, it's good reading. You'll cheer when you get to the last few chapters. :-)

Thank you to Anne Marie and Booklook Bloggers for my review copy.

Samantha says

My first read of Anne Marie Millers was a roaring success, I now can't wait to read through her other titles and stir her words into the folds of my heart.

By the time I'd reached the second chapter of Lean On Me I knew I was in for an absorbing and engaging read. I stopped and pondered over several passages but these are by far my favourite [emphasis my own];

"Are you HIDING from him, ashamed?...GOD SEES YOU, He loves you and He wants to be in a relationship with you"

+ The power of being able to read this from a woman who hasn't even met me, yet KNOWS exactly what I need to hear and how I need to be encouraged.

"...it doesn't matter how many times we concede to our old faults and habits, God is ALWAYS waiting for us to answer his question, "where are you?" with "I'm right here. BROKEN. Please forgive me, Father."

+ Again, a passage that really made my heart swell with emotion. The knowledge that I'm not the only one to fall backwards and more importantly AWAY from Him...and yet each and every time, He's waiting for that

moment when we realise and need His strength to take even one more step.

I sometimes struggle with non-fiction books because they can lack the continuity that a novel offers but Miller delivers page after page, paragraph after paragraph, until my heart and mind were swelling with the knowledge that He is there for me, whatever the circumstances.

Thank you to NetGalley and Thomas Nelson - W Publishing for the opportunity to read this title in exchange for an honest review.

Lorraine Montgomery says

I own a copy of this book courtesy of the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

In *Lean On Me*, Anne Marie Miller tells a very personal story of her struggle to find an "intentional, vulnerable, and consistent community" through which to heal and change her life to one which would be open to leaning on others and allow others to lean on her. While she presents her biographical timeline, the acknowledgment of her need for others to come alongside began at a particularly low point in her life when physical symptoms of that need began to incapacitate her. The time had come for her to completely re-evaluate decisions made and the path she had chosen. The road to recovery began with a phone call to a friend who, she knew, would 'tell it like it is'.

Anne Marie points out that, as humans, we have a dichotomy of emotions: we long to be independent and yet a part of us wants to belong. She talks about different kinds of friendships that we all have. Some relationships are superficial, where we commit nothing and are in no way vulnerable. In other relationships, we can have a commitment, and yet still not allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Or vice versa. But how many of us can actually say that we have relationships where we are both committed and vulnerable? And yet this, she says, is what makes a community.

I found this book to be very challenging. Not to read; it was a quick read, flowing easily, and logically laid out. Not that it wasn't deep; it was extremely deep, and scripture-based. But it was challenging for me on a personal level; I found myself questioning my own relationships to re-evaluate also, and to climb over that wall we tend to build when we've been hurt. While the narrative of this book is moving and revealing, I believe the Reader's Guide at the back which asks questions, then presents next right steps followed by a prayer, is what will change the lives of those who read this book. I have read the book through once, but now my goal is to reread chapter by chapter, honestly answering the questions from the guide for that chapter. Saying so in print is my commitment to re-examining my choices and to begin forming a truly "intentional, vulnerable, and consistent" community of my own. I challenge you to read this book and see if you are inspired to do the same.

Beyond the Pages says

I must confess that I sought this book out for many reasons. One reason that I wanted to read it was because I wanted to understand the concept of what having a healthy, spiritually-enriching community of support and encouragement was all about. The second reason was because I wanted to appreciate the lesson of finding an intentional, vulnerable, and consistent community. The third reason was because I wanted to see if it was

possible, in this age of transparent secrecy and feigned openness, to really and truly have a trusting relationship with others in the faith community. Finally, I wanted to read this book because the title, quite simply, drew me in. I am glad that I decided to get this book.

Lean on Me by Anne Marie Miller was not a "pretty words" kind of book and yet it was a work of beauty. It was raw and honest. It was real and heartbreaking. It was a help and an encouragement.

Although many may say that they cannot relate to Miller's experiences, I genuinely believe that there is a message in this book for everyone. I believe that there are many rich lessons that can prove to be inspiring.

A complimentary copy of this title was made available by the publisher.

Jessica says

When I requested a copy of this book for review I don't think I truly understood how much I had in common with the author, Anne Marie Miller. I knew I was looking for community in my life and that this book would be helpful in my quest for building intentional community, but I didn't realize how much her story would reach out and shake me at times.

This story is one we've heard a million times, woman has a hard time, relies on others and all ends well. Except in the case of this book Anne Marie is one who enjoys solitude and resists being a part of community. I saw so much of myself in her, from being unwilling to appear weak, to preferring to be alone so she wouldn't be vulnerable. I laughed along with her, cried along with her and made the leap to committed and vulnerable in my relationships along with her.

I appreciated her fresh approach to community and her acknowledgement of how community in our modern world can take many forms. It's good for the soul to reach out to people locally and all around the world for our support team of committed, vulnerable relationships. If you're looking for a book about building community in unlikely places along with taking the leap into living faithfully with others then this book is the one for you, to give you that nudge you need to living in community with others.

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