



All Out: A Father and Son Confront the Hard Truths That Made Them Better Men

Kevin Newman , Alex Newman

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Can a man with a demanding job really be a good father? All Out is a bracingly honest answer from Emmy and Gemini Award-winning anchorman Kevin Newman and his grown son, Alex. Confessional and provocative, their memoir is also a touching meditation on ambition, absence and family that will resonate with every parent and child who've ever struggled to connect and understand each other.

Kevin Newman wanted to be a family man in an era when fathers are expected to be more engaged than ever before; he also wanted to reach the top of a profession that demands 24/7 commitment. The higher he climbed, the more irreconcilable those aspirations seemed. Meanwhile, his artistic, solitary son, Alex, was wrestling with his own competing ambitions: to be the sporty, popular son his dad wanted, and to be true to himself. Paradoxically, their attempts to live up to expectations--their own, and each other's--were driving them apart. Then, two parallel identity crises forced a reckoning. Kevin reached the summit of American network television, becoming co-host of Good Morning America--where he was instructed to develop a "quarterback" persona and change his accent, mannerisms, personality, hairstyle and everything else that made him Kevin. At the same time, Alex was realizing he was gay, but frantically trying to mask and change that fact. Both felt like failures and hungered for one another's approval, but didn't know how to bridge their differences. Today, a decade later, they retrace their steps (and missteps) to reinventing their relationship and becoming one another's role models for what it means to be a man in our culture. All Out is a moving chronicle of all the ways that fathers and sons misunderstand and disappoint one another--and a powerful reminder that they can become closer not despite their differences, but because of them.

All Out: A Father and Son Confront the Hard Truths That Made Them Better Men Details

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Katie Knox says

While I truly enjoyed the story (and am also not a son or father) I didn't think the book actually achieved the intended purpose - to demonstrate how to be a better father/parent.

The end of the book was very heartwarming though and I would recommend this to a lot of people.

Alex Gregory says

Definitely *not* what I was expecting, but an interesting read nonetheless.

When I found this book in a thrift store, I assumed that this was a news anchor biography I hadn't read before. After all, Canadian media biographies are a popular subject these days, with anchors like Lloyd Robertson and Pamela Wallin (among many others) releasing memoirs of their time at various news stations. I was curious to see exactly what Kevin Newman had to share about his own career and how his son factored into all of this.

Color me surprised when I opened the book and discovered that this wasn't so much a biography as it was an examination of how Newman reacted to his son, Alex, coming out as gay. The book itself downplays this from a cursory scan - you'd have to look inside the front cover and read the blurb on the dust jacket if you want to understand the real purpose of the book. Even then, the book doesn't really deal with this revelation in detail until the last three chapters. It seems like the writers and/or editors weren't confident enough in the subject matter to make it the main focus.

The subject matter didn't bother me at all, though I admit it took me a while to finish it because I just couldn't relate to this as much. I'm certainly not the target audience for this product.

My biggest problem with the book is that it's impressively bipolar in its tone. It seems like someone took a draft of what Kevin had for an autobiography and amalgamated it into a meandering tale about his son growing up and trying to figure out who he is, to the detriment of both individuals. The early chapters in *All Out* focusing on Alex are meandering and don't really say much of note. There's just not much he has to say about being the son of a media personality, and his complaints usually boil down to "my dad wasn't there for me, and I feel bad".

In comparison, Kevin's chapters feel like a blockbuster movie. We get to see him at various stages of his career, working with Good Morning America and Global Television, his thoughts and feelings about covering live events like the car crash that killed Princess Diana, and anecdotes about how he tried to balance his work and family life. Even then, his chapters devolve into the same format - talking about how he had to leave the network and join a new one, a few anecdotes about whiny media executives or personalities, a few thoughts on a big news story, rinse, repeat.

The book does pick up a bit in the last few chapters when the title subject is explored, but it's almost over by that point and the revelation doesn't really feel earned. If this subject/reveal had a greater focus in the first

couple chapters as a framing device, the story would have felt more organic and tied in a lot better.

All Out was certainly an interesting book to read, but I'm not sure if the people who created it understood who their target audience is. The book's extremely unbalanced and favors Kevin's autobiography, while marginalizing his son's revelation and relegating it to a near-afterthought.

Bobby Karmakar says

Manhood, Masculinity, Self

Kevin Newman was a person I noticed on TV a lot, most noticeably on Global with his unique feature at I believe 5:30 on weeknights, *Global National with Kevin Newman*. As the end of the book was nearing, the memories of that show mainly reminded me of how that was his ambition and remember fondly this was about what he wanted to report and speak on. The rest of the book is also about his career, and most importantly, how he came to be a father, notably with his son, Alex Newman.

Both Kevin and Alex have faced courageous journeys through failure in Kevin's career, as well as most importantly the struggles they have both individually conquered. Though to each other, they did not realize they were each suffering from something until the writing of this book, it was the process that both of them each went through personally, and also the connection of how they became closer than ever before. In fact, the biggest of all was their relationship as father and son.

This book was tough to put down. The inside story of Kevin Newman is one that can be relatable to many people, most notably to show what it means to be a man. Not because they are simply male, but rather because men also have feelings and insecurities that are explored in *All Out* by both Kevin and Alex. On Alex Newman, his struggles were the ones I related to as I often wondered what Kevin would have thought as he read them. Evidently, they have united to become better men for not only themselves but to each other.

In memoirs, I enjoy reading about the person's life and memories of their experiences. What I love most is when I can discover something about themselves they've unveiled, and even better, how that can relate to yourself then make that as an opportunity to grow and be better. That includes me. *All Out* was such the case, and I wish everyone reading this will also pick this book up for themselves, then share it with someone else.

Dianne says

This is a valuable resource for any family wanting help in understanding the emotions of those who are coming out as being gay. Kevin Newman is an extremely successful Canadian journalist. He writes with honesty and clarity about important events in his life. Father and son share in the telling of the journey they have been on throughout the past few decades. The lessons learned by Kevin Newman can be summed up with his advice to everyone. Have the courage of your convictions and the strength to push past fear so that you can own your own life.

Stacey Cornelius says

A friend once observed, "There's a difference between a great guy and a good man." All Out is a story of a father (Kevin Newman) trying to be a good man while living up to what he believes to be success, as a TV reporter, anchor, and host, and as a father and a man. Written in parallel, his son Alex struggles with what he believes society expects of him versus who he truly is.

The stories are told in parallel, neither man reading what the other has written until the manuscript is done. What unfolds is honest and thoughtful, with surprising similarities in their internal struggles.

While this is written from a position of white privilege, it's worthwhile to read, if only to be reassured there are thoughtful and compassionate men who strive to be far more than "great guys". They both seem to want to be better people.

PEI Public Library Service says

Canadian TV broadcaster Kevin Newman and his son Alex have written a unique book about fathers and sons, about how family history and expectations influence the present and future. "All Out: a father and son confront the hard truths that made them better men" is written in alternating chapters by Kevin and Alex, without either of them knowing what the other was writing. This approach allows the reader to see two perspectives of the same events. It is an engaging memoir, which feels rawly honest: if both authors are writing a version of the same situation, it's harder for each to whitewash the details in order to save his own ego. As Alex says, "...I'm glad we worked this way. If we'd tried to write together, we would have quarrelled over whose version of each story was right. Seeing both narratives side by side, it's clear that we're both right, we're both telling the truth. What's important is to hear one another's truth, really take it in and think about it, not argue with it."

Both father and son are likeable people, and their book has them doing exactly what the subtitle says, they confront hard and intimate truths that help them realize who they are individually and together as father and son. The book touches on a number of subjects relevant to parents and teens, such as work/life balance, family communication, career goals, bullying, and sexuality; it's a great read for both parents and teens.

Borrow a copy: <http://bit.ly/1QJxVXC>

Susan says

I feel so fortunate to have read an advance reading copy of this book. It is beautifully and honestly written. This important book will help increase acceptance of the LGBT community. Alternating chapters by father and son reveal how differently we perceive and understand the same event. In all, this is a story of love between a father and a son, of the importance of family and accepting who we are. Thanks to both Kevin and Alex Newman for their introspection and sharing their story.

Jackie says

Brilliant and honest. This book hits the mark in so many ways on so many topics. I truly think there's something in it for everyone. But overall the love of a family and the journey of a father and son to understand themselves and each other will resonate with readers of all backgrounds.

Steven Snyder says

I loved the way Alex and Kevin wrote this book. By presenting the reader with their own perspectives on certain stages of their lives together gave the book almost a 3D-feeling of their realities. As a gay man close to Alex's age, I found many, many similarities in my own story of coming out, and as I read about his struggles and paired that with Kevin's own struggles in his relationship with his son, I felt I had gained some lessons and inspiration for my own relationship with my parents. Kevin and Alex present themselves in a very raw way that is human emotion, and I commend them for their bravery to do so. It wasn't always happy times and presented with flattery as they take the reader through some very personal failures and challenges throughout their lives that impacted the decisions and emotions they had to face. Whether you identify with the LGBTQ community or have a close family member or friend who does, this is an enlightening and inspiring read.

Jaclyn says

Candid, well-written and reflective.

Stan James says

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of *All Out* is that Kevin and Alex Newman wrote their own chapters independent of each other, allowing the reader to directly compare the father's and son's take on events and more importantly, how the two saw each other, which forms the heart of the book.

And they often saw each other very differently, creating a tension that existed between the two men until they were both adults.

In a journey that starts with the senior Newman co-hosting CBC's *Miidday*, moves onto his brief (and disastrous) stint as co-host of *Good Morning America*, and ends with him back in Canada as part of CTV's *W5*, Kevin Newman provides insights and observations about the TV news business, ranging from the long hours that necessitated so much time away from his family, the sometimes farcical demands of producers and handlers (on *Good Morning America* he was asked to dye his eyelashes to make them darker and presumably more masculine) and ultimately how for decades his work defined so much of his existence--at the expense of family and life outside work.

Alex's journey begins as a young boy, sensitive and creative, bullied in school and seemingly failing at living up to the masculine ideals of his father, showing little interest in sports or other "guy" pursuits.

It comes to a head when at age 17 Alex realizes he is gay and comes out to his family. Or rather, he tries to come out but his father actually cuts him off at the pass, so to speak, by asking his son (who had called a family meeting), "Is this about your sexuality?" From that awkward beginning, the two start a process of testing and challenging each to accept each other as they are, not as they wish they were.

For Kevin he finally realizes that work is just work and family matters more. He lets go of his own hangups regarding what he sees as the masculine ideal and confronts his discomfort with homosexuality. In the process he achieves a breakthrough in his relationship with his son and with his own father as well.

Alex's struggle with being gay stems not so much from being afraid of how others would see him--virtually everyone he knows was accepting--but in how it defined him in a way that he didn't like. Being gay meant he could never be that ideal son that Kevin wanted and tried so much to shape through the years. At his darkest moments he contemplates suicide, as many gay youth do, but a network of friends and acquaintances keeps him from going too far into the abyss.

The writing by both men is fine if not extraordinary, though Alex ably captures the voice and mentality of his younger self. Kevin's behind-the-scenes look at TV news is in some ways quietly horrifying and in other ways warmly affirming--it turns out Peter Jennings really was a warm, wonderful person. But it is the intertwined story of the two men that speaks strongest here, and it is difficult to not be moved by the self-realizations that allowed Kevin to fully embrace his son for who he is--and to finally let go of the mental baggage he had carried for decades, allowing him to finally, truly be content.

And not have to worry about dying his eyelashes ever again.

Thumb up.

Lisa says

I've been a huge fan of Kevin Newman's work for years. This is a brilliant, entertaining, and touching memoir. Kevin and his son Alex tell their story with unflinching honesty. A must-read!

Paula Dembeck says

Kevin Newman is a well-known, award winning journalist and TV anchor, recognized in both Canada and the United States for the work he has done. He has flown in a Blackhawk helicopter over war torn Afghanistan, co-hosted both the CBC morning Midday Show and ABC's Good Morning America and founded and anchored the Global Evening News from Vancouver. But his successful career came at a huge cost.

When Alex, Kevin's eighteen year old son announced to the family he was gay, Kevin had no difficulty embracing his son and his sexuality. He thought that it might even bring them closer together, but it seemed to drive them even further apart. Kevin struggled with the life Alex was embracing and was forced to re-examine his beliefs about masculinity and sexuality. That process surprised and disappointed him since he had always considered himself to be enlightened and tolerant. It took Kevin ten years before he could be truly comfortable with his son's friends, their parties and the gay lifestyle.

This is the story of Kevin and Alex's journey to understand and accept each other. It is more about their relationship than about Alex's sexuality and every reader who is a parent will recognize its nuances. It is about being honest, about recognizing and sharing ambitions, failures, and vulnerabilities as well as ego satisfying successes. It is about the kind of conversation parents do not often have with their children. Most fathers feel the need to appear as strong, successful stalwarts, especially to their sons, not as someone with failures, disappointments and uncertainties.

Many readers are familiar with Kevin Newman's career but not all the details that lie behind it. TV personalities in the news are evaluated as much on their likeability as on their journalistic skills. Newman was constantly groomed to ensure he met the profile his employers craved, the one that ensured the show's survival. He was likeable enough, but did not have the magnetism the producers felt the public craved or the chatty chemistry with his co-host. These were the things that attracted the important ratings and determined success or failure.

Newman was forced to submit to everything from changing his glasses and growing his hair longer to dying his eyelashes and attending trendy social events. The producers were forcing him to become someone that he wasn't, and he found the process humiliating. He wanted to be respected for his journalistic skills, not how he appeared in front of a camera. But he did not defend the person he was because like most of us, he wanted to be successful, not just for himself but also for his family. Unfortunately, the more successful he became, the less time he spent at home and the more he struggled to be the father he had always wanted to be, the father he felt he never had himself.

Alex, Kevin's artistic, solitary son was also struggling. He had few friends and was trying to be the popular boy that his father wanted him to be. Alex was constantly bullied at school because of his small physical size and his different interests which did not include sports. He loved and respected his successful and confident father, who he thought had never failed at anything in his life. But his father was seldom at home, and when he was, he was always preoccupied with work. It seemed to Alex that his father had simply chosen his work over his son.

When they did spend time together, Alex hated the activities his father organized, which were never anything he would have chosen himself. Alex felt that they were simply intended to mold him into the son Kevin wanted Alex to become. Meanwhile, Kevin was on edge every minute he spent with Alex, trying to make up for the time he was away, trying to make the time they spent together memorable. And at times he was angry. Angry that Alex rejected every activity Kevin suggested, angry because he was knocking himself out trying to do things with his son and getting pushed away at every turn.

Kevin yearned for a connection with Kevin and wanted his approval but did not know which way to turn, always concerned about disappointing him. As becomes clear, neither wanted the other to see their failures. They were trying so hard to live up to the commonly accepted ideal: Dad was to be the hero and the son was to live up to, and even exceed his father's expectations.

This writing project which Kevin undertook with his son Alex, took two years to complete. They wrote in alternating chapters, vowing not to look at each other's work until the manuscript was completed. Both admit this decision which they made together, really frightened them.

It is often painful to read as father and son tell the same evolving story but from different perspectives. In so many ways, it is the story of every parent and child trying to reach out to each other and find a connection.

Alex is now a successful art director in the advertising industry. Kevin is now a correspondent with CBC's

newsmagazine W5. He has reclaimed himself and no longer must listen to those eager to tell him who he should be or who he should look like. He always disliked how much power network TV had over him and hated himself for giving into them. He says he is happier now being a freelancer working on contract. He recognizes that he has lost his driving ambition, but still loves his work which he knows he does well.

This is a very moving story, a story of a father and son trying to live up to weighty expectations, both their own and that of each other. They finally came to realize and confront the wedge that was driving them apart. What father and son learned was not about sexuality and tolerance. Their differences could have been about religion, politics or their career aspirations. They learned the real subject was father and sons and what they could learn from each other but frequently do not.

Kevin shares his journey of becoming the anchor he always wanted to be, not the celebrated anchor of a TV show, but the anchor of a close knit family.

It is a very brave book, one that deserves everyone's attention.

Michelle says

"All Out: A Father and Son Confront the Hard Truths That Made Them Better Men" co-authored by Kevin and his son Alex Newman. This is the story of love and acceptance between a father and son, also of growth, change, development that define masculinity in both career, family, and personal life.

At 34 years of age, Kevin was feeling the pressure of his position as a news anchor at Midday News for the CBC, preferring to remain in Toronto. When he was unexpectedly let go, he was promptly offered a position in the US anchoring World News Now for ABC. Relocating his family to Summit, NJ was a new adventure for this Canadian family. Kevin would be affiliated with the great names in TV journalism: Peter Jennings (would become his mentor), Barbara Walters, Ted Koppel, Diane Sawyer, Sam Donaldson, Charlie Gibson.. In 1997 Kevin was in the right place when he anchored the news covering the tragic accident that claimed the life of Princess Diana, translating the first broadcasts from French to English for American viewers. In 2005 he would cover the news of the Iraq war while stationed in Afghanistan. Working at the top of this professionally demanding and highly competitive career was challenging as Kevin struggled to meet the needs of his wife and two children, and being the family's sole provider. There was an unmistakable heaviness in the first half of the book related to the stress Kevin endured from his work/career.

Meeting the demands of his career, didn't come to him easily, he had to remain connected to his work 24/7 to stay on top of his profession. His wife Cathy was diagnosed with a serious health condition that affected the family outlook and standing in their community. Alex, being bullied at school, felt oddly out of place among his peers, and with his father's celebrity status on news television. Eventually Alex would reach the conclusion that no matter how hard he tried he couldn't develop the normal expected interest in girls. His mother, he thought, would be disappointed in him for not marrying a beautiful Asian girl.

The second part of the book, was very inspiring as the Newman's came to terms with Alex as a gay young man. Kevin decided to return to Canada after leaving GMA, his family had saved money wisely, avoiding living a large showy lifestyle, plus the encouraging news concerning Cathy's health. Unconditional family love, tolerance, and support had prevailed. In 2012 Kevin and Alex co-produced a news feature raising awareness and advocating for gay youth.

Kevin Newman is an award winning network news anchor, correspondent, featured in Canada and the US for decades.

Alex Newman is an award winning art director at J. Walter Thompson Toronto. He was named as one of Canada's top 30 under 30 by Marketing Magazine in 2014.

Many thanks and much appreciation to Random House Canada for the ARC of this book for the purpose of review.

Gavin Stephenson-Jackman says

A very interesting tale of growth and acceptance. Kevin and Alex Newman have created a unique biography of their growth and relationship as father and son. Kevin is desperately trying to give his children and family a better life than he remembers from his childhood. Working in the public eye as a reporter and broadcaster, though seems to be having the opposite effect. Alex, knows that his father loves him, but feels like he is failing to meet his father's expectations. As he grows up Alex comes to the realization that he is truly different and fears that his father will not accept him, based on the observations he's made of his father over time. These two wrote their own interpretations of events independently and then combined them in one volume, so you see the events from both sides as the grow apart and then together again as they learn more about each other.
