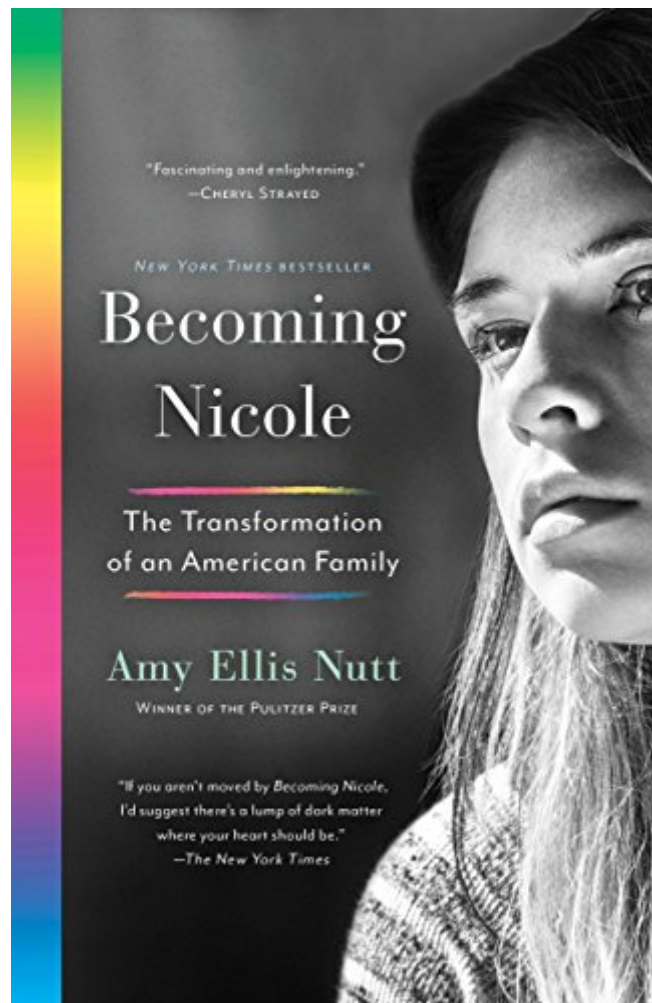




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# Becoming Nicole: The Transformation Of An American Family



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY PEOPLE AND ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY MEN'S JOURNAL • A STONEWALL HONOR BOOK IN NONFICTION • A FINALIST FOR THE LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD FOR TRANSGENDER NONFICTION

The inspiring true story of a transgender girl, her identical twin brother, and an ordinary American family's extraordinary journey to understand, nurture, and celebrate the uniqueness in us all, from the Pulitzer Prize-winning science reporter for The Washington Post When Wayne and Kelly Maines adopted identical twin boys, they thought their lives were complete. But it wasn't long before they noticed a marked difference between Jonas and his brother, Wyatt. Jonas preferred sports and trucks and many of the things little boys were supposed to like; but Wyatt liked princess dolls and dress-up and playing Little Mermaid. By the time the twins were toddlers, confusion over Wyatt's insistence that he was female began to tear the family apart. In the years that followed, the Maineses came to question their long-held views on gender and identity, to accept and embrace Wyatt's transition to Nicole, and to undergo an emotionally wrenching transformation of their own that would change all their lives forever. *Becoming Nicole* chronicles a journey that could have destroyed a family but instead brought it closer together. It's the story of a mother whose instincts told her that her child needed love and acceptance, not ostracism and disapproval; of a Republican, Air Force veteran father who overcame his deepest fears to become a vocal advocate for trans rights; of a loving brother who bravely stuck up for his twin sister; and of a town forced to confront its prejudices, a school compelled to rewrite its rules, and a courageous community of transgender activists determined to make their voices heard. Ultimately, *Becoming Nicole* is the story of an extraordinary girl who fought for the right to be herself. Granted wide-ranging access to personal diaries, home videos, clinical journals, legal documents, medical records, and the Maineses themselves, Amy Ellis Nutt spent almost four years reporting this immersive account of an American family confronting an issue that is at the center of today's cultural debate. *Becoming Nicole* will resonate with anyone who's ever raised a child, felt at odds with society's conventions and norms, or had to embrace life when it plays out unexpectedly. It's a story of standing up for your beliefs and yourself—and it will inspire all of us to do the same.

Praise for *Becoming Nicole*—“A profoundly moving true story about one remarkable family's evolution.” —People “Fascinating and enlightening.” —Cheryl Strayed “Exceptional . . . Stories move the walls that need to be moved,” Nicole told her father last year. In telling Nicole's story and those of her brother and parents luminously, and

with great compassion and intelligence, that is exactly what Amy Ellis Nutt has done.ââThe Washington Postâelf you arenât moved by Becoming Nicole, Iâd suggest thereâs a lump of dark matter where your heart should be.ââJennifer Senior, The New York TimesâExtraordinary . . . a wonderful and inspiring story.ââMinneapolis Star TribuneâA downright necessary bookâand a remarkable act of generosity by the Maines family.ââBuzzFeedFrom the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed this book, and it made a day of travel pass very quickly. Two things in this book really struck me. First, I think it's easy to view those who actively defend LGBTQ rights as crusaders and zealots. The truth is that they are a patchwork of people who by and large have been forced to examine their own viewpoints and carefully consider the status quo when it comes to opportunities for and treatment of the LGBT community. Many have not done this simply because it interested them, but because they were faced with the reality of being or loving

someone who does not conform to the rigid gender norms that have been laid out for us culturally. Though I have long identified as someone on the left of the political spectrum, I struggled mightily when my child began identifying as the opposite gender, and it has been a continual learning process. And while Nicole's father Wayne and I began on opposing ends of the political spectrum, I identified with him in so many ways throughout this book, and his journey felt very familiar to me. I am immensely thankful to books like this and the plethora of organizations and media attention this issue has garnered over the past 5-10 years, as they are truly invaluable to families like ours trying to better understand our children and learn how to stand up for them at school and in society. Second, I am continually amazed by children and their unquestioning acceptance of people who differ than them, but at the same time saddened and frustrated by some groups' stubborn insistence on labeling transgender individuals as sexual deviants. This abominable behavior was on full display throughout the second half of this book and I find it infuriating. As a reminder, these are children we are talking about - many as young as 3, 5, 7, 10 years old. They are not predators. They are not a danger to others. They are children and they deserve to be loved and cherished. Please stand up against the perversion of religion to preach hate about children - the day that is achieved cannot come fast enough. I am very lucky to have a partner in my life similar to Nicole's mom Kelly, who has strongly supported my child every step of the way, and was a rock before I could be. They once said to me - "Just think: this experience will make us stronger, will make us better." I couldn't agree more.

For an understanding of a historical precedent for the LGBTQ community and humankind this is an exceptional book to read. Not always light and easy but for an educated reader all the data/information would be appreciated. For someone seeking an entertaining read, pages might be skipped but the story nonetheless will grab at your heartstrings and be appreciated. BRAVO to the parents, especially Nicole's mother, who showed what loving perfection is despite all the battles, struggled, disappointments, etc. She is the hero of this story. She is the hero of the voiceless millions who are intimidated and shoved into shadows - not allowed to shine in their God given glory to be who they are. And Bravo to the author took this on and did it justice. Lastly, Bravo to Nicole, a lightning rod for everything that dared to suppress her but in her inimitable self stayed true to who she was. And at last it isn't lightning striking her down but a glorious light of loving acceptance that shine on her.

My background is Wayne's background: conservative, Republican, religious and fairly sure of how

things ought to be. Understanding comes from learning. Walking with this family through some very difficult experiences has changed my attitude. Jonas and Nicole were blessed to have such strong, intelligent and loving parents. This is a remarkable family who modestly thinks of themselves as ordinary. The sacrifices made by all four of them are extraordinary. Thank you to the family for sharing their story. Thank you to the author for doing an amazing job of not only telling this special story but also educating the reader. I couldn't put it down and I hope to continue to hear of Nicole's and Jonas' successes.

The story of a transgender girl during her difficult childhood, along with the experiences of her family members -- identical twin brother, and two parents -- is successfully told by the author. She portrays the cruelty of society, the wisdom of the mother, the emotional growth of the father, and the loyalty of the twin brother as she describes the often tumultuous events in their lives. A good read.

I chose to read this book because I was interested in learning more about what transgender really means. I hoped that I could become more understanding of persons in this situation. I truly appreciate all that the Maines' family went through and thank the author for what I believe should be required reading for educators today. Times are changing and there is still much to learn. Thank you.

The straightforward story telling style of this book made it easy to read quickly, but it also let the story itself take center stage. It was so interesting to hear the account of a transgender transformation from baby to adult. I think if everyone read this there would be a lot more understanding and acceptance in the world. As open minded as I am, I learned a lot from reading Nicole's story.

Amy Ellis Nutt is a great writer. Even when she delves into the brain science of how a transgendered brain is created, she is able to hold my interest. Her interviews and the way she depicts the Maines family's story is captivating. This is a great story about an American hero. Nicole and her family are warriors and have fought to show and to educate other people how to support and love one another, through adversity, hate, bigotry and other challenges. Ellis Nutt captures the essence and true love that this family has for one another.

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