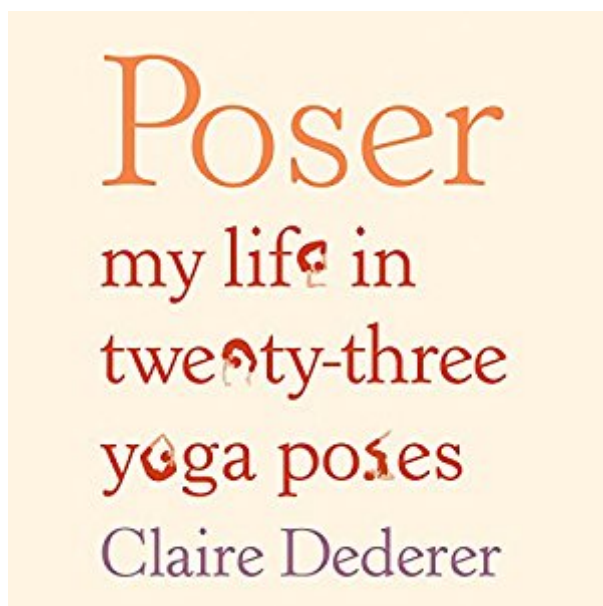


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# Poser: My Life In Twenty-Three Yoga Poses



## Synopsis

"The studio was decorated in the style of Don't Be Afraid, We're Not a Cult. All was white and blond and clean, as though the room had been designed for surgery, or Swedish people. The only spot of color came from the Tibetan prayer flags strung over the doorway into the studio. In flagrant defiance of my longtime policy of never entering a structure adorned with Tibetan prayer flags, I removed my shoes, paid my ten bucks, and walked in...." Ten years ago, Claire Dederer put her back out while breastfeeding her baby daughter. Told to try yoga by everyone from the woman behind the counter at the co-op to the homeless guy on the corner, she signed up for her first class. She fell madly in love. Over the next decade, she would tackle triangle, wheel, and the dreaded crow, becoming fast friends with some poses and developing long-standing feuds with others. At the same time, she found herself confronting the forces that shaped her generation. Daughters of women who ran away to find themselves and made a few messes along the way, Dederer and her peers grew up determined to be good, good, good-even if this meant feeling hemmed in by the smugness of their organic-buying, attachment-parenting, anxiously conscientious little world. Yoga seemed to fit right into this virtuous program, but to her surprise, Dederer found that the deeper she went into the poses, the more they tested her most basic ideas of what makes a good mother, daughter, friend, wife-and the more they made her want something a little less tidy, a little more improvisational. Less goodness, more joy. Poser is unlike any other book about yoga you will read-because it is actually a book about life. Witty and heartfelt, sharp and irreverent, Poser is for anyone who has ever tried to stand on their head while keeping both feet on the ground.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book started out as a funny commentary on how much energy we put into looking like our friends and neighbors; to fitting in. Thus begins Claire's journey into Yoga. As Claire's understanding of yoga deepens, so does her understanding of her life. I could understand and empathize as she made sense of the life she had and was living. I found her honesty regarding her struggles refreshing. Thank you, Claire for demonstrating what makes a great memoir!

I love yoga. And I loved this book. The book is exactly what the title states. The author's life blended in with the poses she learns to get into. Yoga and how it affects her and even some others around her. She has a way with writing that would have me cracking up. Great timing with her humor. As a child of separated and then later divorced parents I could relate to so much of what she wrote. Also having had a parent from the same generation as her mother and how that affected much of their life choices and attitudes. This is the kind of author I would love to sit down and just have coffee with and conversations with as friends.

I loved this book. Unlike several reviewers, I found yoga gems sprinkled throughout the book. The author didn't try to make herself liked; she tried to be honest. Marriage can be tough, and this was one of the most reveling books about living with someone prone to depression. I'm way beyond the child rearing stage, but the way she doggedly went about trying to do the best job she could with her kids was admirable. And painful. Seattle is one of the most unique cities in the country. Loved her description of many of the Seattle areas. As far as yoga, I've been a yoga student for years. This book had a lot of food for thought as to the varying philosophies of her teachers. Highly recommended.

This is a memoir by Claire Dederer, detailing her liberal upbringing as she works her way through the realities of motherhood and marriage. For Claire, Yoga is her only "me" time. She and her husband are raising their young daughter; though, as is typical in most families, the majority of the child rearing falls to her. Her husband is a freelance writer and they struggle to make ends meet. The book is less about Yoga studio practice and more about the philosophy of Yoga (though it doesn't come out and say so.) Claire realizes the effects that her rather unstructured upbringing had on her - some good, some bad - and how she is reliving them in her own marriage. I wouldn't say that I

loved the book, but it was a pleasant enough read. It's a bit too serious for just a beach read, but the thought process is similar to regular chick lit.

I enjoyed the parts of the book that were related to yoga or neutral versions of the author's life. At times, she seemed to be too caught up in her problems to recognize the gifts she had in her life - good husband, two children, enough resources to support the family and have time to spend with her children. There are parts where the writing style and phrasing were very engaging, but overall the story devolved into too much "poor me" to be an engaging read.

Poser is a thoughtful, witty, and engaging book. Many aspects of my life parallel those of the author's (I live in Seattle, have young children, and practice yoga), so I suspected that her memoir would resonate with me. And it certainly did. But Poser offers much more than standard memoir fare. Claire Dederer's research and reflection on the core themes of this book -- the evolution of women's independence over the past few decades, the evolving shape of motherhood, long-term love, and, of course, yoga in the 21st-century US -- offer many insights into the challenges and opportunities that characterize many lives today. I finished Poser a few weeks ago and have thought about certain passages many times since; Claire Dederer touched upon thoughts, feelings, hopes, and worries that many of us experience and yet seldom describe or discuss so eloquently. I hope to see more from Claire Dederer down the line. She is an honest and talented writer.

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