

Scott, L. (2009). Two is Enough: A Couple's Guide to Living Childless by Choice.
Berkeley: Seal Press.

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Laura Scott's book, "Two is Enough", aims to shatter stereotypes that people have about those who do not wish to have any children. The book explains how Scott, at age forty-three and in the sixteenth year of her marriage, created her Childless by Choice project, in which she provides twenty-eight interviews with many couples who decide to be childless, or childfree, by choice. Scott, being childfree herself, is curious enough to research the many reasons why other couples decide to be childfree as well. Scott confronts the assumptions that many people have about those who are childfree, and provides many reasons as to why these people choose to not have kids. She also debunks myths that people have about those who remain childfree, and puts forth the notion that not choosing to have kids is a rational, and normal choice.

Scott explains how the idea of a couple remaining childless is seen as strange to most of society. It is widely accepted that parenthood is the norm, and all people should eventually have children. The three expectations that people in our society have is that we will all become parents one day, that parenthood is a critical stage in our lives, and all couples should be encouraged to parent (p. 175). Through her own personal accounts, and through stories from other couples, Scott shares how friends, family, peers, and colleagues, are quick to judge those who choose a childfree life, especially married couples. Scott states that the "assumption of parenthood persists even while the assumption of marriage has lost its power in modern courtship", which shows how important society finds childbearing (p. 44). When people express their desire to not have

children, many people try persuade them into having kids, and even will look down on people who have these thoughts.

Scott first explains what the difference is between being childless or childfree. Those who identify as childfree see the positivity in not having children, whereas those who are childless may feel the absence of a child (p. 18). However, Scott states how she has met many couples who define themselves as one or the other, all with their own self-definitions of what these terms mean to them. Scott provides four categories of people who remain childless. There are (1) the “early articulators”, who decide to be childless early in life, (2) the “postponers”, who delay having children, (3) the “acquiescers”, who decide to be childless because their partner wishes to be, and (4) the “undecided”, who are still deciding whether they want children or not (p. 16). Throughout Scott’s research on the subject of being childfree by choice, she found that out of the 171 of the participants in her project, a majority of them self-identified as early articulators, and the least of them were still undecided (p. 43).

During interviews with childfree couples, Scott brings up the idea of humans having an innate maternal or paternal gene. The couples had mixed thoughts about this topic. Some believed that there is a gene that people have that gives people the urge to have children, while others did not. Those who did think that there are paternal/maternal genes, believe that they do not carry this gene. These couples explain that although they do not think they have this gene, that does not mean they dislike children. Many of the childfree couples presented in this book are fond of children, but decide not to have their own due to many other reasons. If one were to compare the pros and cons list of having a child from one of these childfree couples, it would be seen that the cons outweigh the pros.

Scott provides eighteen reasons as to why couples choose to remain childless. Out of the

participants that are partaking in her study, the top three motives as to why couples remain childfree are: (1) they are very happy with their relationship, and having a child will not improve it, (2) these couples value their freedom, and (3) they do not want the responsibility of raising a child (pp. 76-78). The least important motive these couples have for not having children is the concern over physical risks of childbirth.

The interviews Scott conducts with various couples shows how these people have come to the decision to remain childfree. The people in these couples are a mix of the four different categories of people who want to be childfree. Through these interviews, Scott proves to the audience that these relationships are “valid and filled with enough friendship, love, and mutual respect to sustain these couples over many years of marriage” (p. 150). Her mantra that “happiness is a choice” is validated by meeting and interviewing these couples.

To further prove her point that being childfree is not something people should be against, Scott provides the myths and realities of living a childfree life. Scott debunks the myth that those who remain childfree are selfish. People believe that because they do not wish to bring a child into this world, this makes them self-centered and greedy people. However, she shows that perhaps it is those who do want and have children who should be considered selfish, as some people only want children in order to have someone to look after them when they grow old, or to pass on the family name. Some other assumptions Scott lists that people make about those that remain childless are: they dislike kids, they are immature, unfulfilled, materialistic, they will regret their decision, and the decision they made was easy, and that pets are often the replacement of kids.

The book includes personal experiences, the experiences of other couples, and

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quantitative data to illustrate how common it is to live a childfree life. Scott's main goal of this book is to normalize the idea of wanting to not have children, and also teaches those who do want and have kids, why it is okay for couples to remain childless. Scott provides many examples and gives thorough explanations on this topic.

The intended audience of this book are those couples who are still undecided about whether to have children or not, and allows them to see why other couples choose to do so, and may help them to make a decision. Couples who have already decided to be childfree may also benefit from reading this book as it can help dismiss any doubts that they have about their decision. I believe it can also teach those who are close-minded on the idea of being childfree, why many couples choose this route, and will hopefully allow them to understand these people more.

Scott aims to normalize the decision to not have children by providing various reasons and examples on why that is. Her book can be used in disciplines such as sociology, women's studies, and psychology to teach students the different ways in which one chooses to live his or her life. I found "Two is Enough" a great book to read, and being an early acquiescer myself, it helped me confirm my beliefs, and showed me that there are many others like myself as well. The book was very informative and easy to follow as well. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in learning more about living a childfree life.