

## Joanne McHugh in a Page

Joanne McHugh is the mom-on-call who's dispensing wit and wisdom for facing the minor struggles and major challenges of young adulthood. Her mission is helping to address the mystery that haunts most 20-something women: How exactly do you go about building a life that has it all—a career, love and marriage, and (eventually) children?

Joanne is no stranger to the struggles associated with assembling your grown-up life. Though she was voted her high school's Girl Most Likely to Succeed, Joanne had a hard time figuring out what she wanted to be when she grew up. The wayward accounting major earned her bachelor's degree and her M.B.A. from Villanova University, and eventually found her way to a career in international marketing with a pharmaceutical company.

Despite a less than stellar dating career, she found "The Guy" and has been happily married for 30 years. Joanne postponed having kids for a while because she had no idea where she was going to put the baby. She figured it out, and, even though her first child made her wonder if it was possible to return early from maternity leave, she went on to have two more.

After she climbed a few rungs on the corporate ladder, Joanne rebalanced her life to spend more time at home with her daughters. Consulting gigs allowed her to employ her thinking skills on something besides the kids' activity schedules. Joanne also had the chance to try on a variety of occupational hats, including writer, editor, brand strategist, and personal historian.

As her daughters started to fly the coop, Joanne recalled what it was like to be in their shoes, teetering on the brink of adulthood. She thought about how getting her first job, getting married, having her first baby, and other experiences were trickier to navigate than she expected. To help her daughters be better prepared, Joanne wrote *Things Your Mother Should Have Told You*, an unfiltered and often funny account of what assembling her grown-up life really looked like.

*Things Your Mother Should Have Told You* features tales about troublesome situations like picking the wrong major and having to fire a bridesmaid. It covers tricky subjects like assessing whether he's "The Guy" and figuring out whether you're ready to have a baby. It attempts to answer how-the-hell-is-this-going-to-work questions like whether it really is possible to juggle a career and motherhood like conventional wisdom says you can. Most importantly, it delivers the message that everything usually works out okay.

Joanne lives in the suburbs of Philadelphia with her husband, a yellow Lab, three cats, and grown children who are occasionally in residence. While she ponders whether to start a Parents Facing Redundancy support group, Joanne distracts herself by reading *People* magazine and the obituaries, which also helps satisfy her above-average curiosity about people's life stories.