



# My Two Moms: Lessons of Love, Strength, and What Makes a Family

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**My Two Moms: Lessons of Love, Strength, and What Makes a Family** Zach Wahls , Bruce Littlefield  
A resounding testament to individuality and the power of family in all forms from the young man who “lit up the Internet” (Ellen DeGeneres)

On January 31, 2011, Zach Wahls addressed the Iowa House Judiciary Committee in a public forum regarding full marriage equality. The nineteen-year-old son of a same-sex couple, Wahls proudly proclaimed, “The sexual orientation of my parents has had zero effect on the content of my character.” Hours later, his speech was posted on YouTube, where it went viral, quickly receiving more than two million views. By the end of the week, everyone knew his name and wanted to hear more from the boy with two moms.

Same-sex marriage will be a major—possibly the defining—issue in this year’s election cycle, and Wahls speaks to that, but also to a broader issue. Sure, he’s handsome and athletic, an environmental engineering student, and an Eagle Scout. Yet, growing up with two moms, he knows what it’s like to feel different and to fear being made fun of or worse. In the inspirational spirit of *It Gets Better* edited by Dan Savage and Terry Miller, *My Two Moms* also delivers a reassuring message to same-sex couples, their kids, and anyone who’s ever felt like an outsider: “You are not alone.”

## My Two Moms: Lessons of Love, Strength, and What Makes a Family Details

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## **From Reader Review My Two Moms: Lessons of Love, Strength, and What Makes a Family for online ebook**

### **Sara Jane says**

This is such an important (and surprisingly inspirational) book. It was a delight to read a book by a former student, too. WSS represent!

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### **Kristen says**

If you grew up lucky enough to have two parents who loved you and taught you how to be a good person, then you have something in common with Zach Wahls. You might not have two moms like he does, but that doesn't really matter. At all. I was lucky enough that my two loving parents taught me that love is love, there is nothing wrong with same gendered couples and I have been lucky to always have great same sex couples in my life. If you know someone who isn't as lucky, but has at least a bit of an open mind, this might be a good thing to give them to read. In many ways it is the very ordinary story of a boy growing up, which is exactly the point, who also happens to be a wonderful advocate for marriage equality based on his family.

A quick read and a good reminder that you can change people's minds and hearts, even if it's a slow process. I also particularly liked the section at the end with all the reasons people bring up to oppose gay marriage and his responses to each.

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### **Jenna says**

For more reviews please visit [www.canneryrowreads.com](http://www.canneryrowreads.com)

I've shied away from reviewing any books that may be seen as politically controversial on this blog but this book was too good to pass up for a review. As some of you have read this may know already, I am as liberal as they come. I interned for the very progressive Senator Feingold while in college and will passionately defend my beliefs to the death.

But this book opened up even my eyes to things about the LGBT movement I had never considered before. You may have heard of Zach Wahls previously. He is the very articulate, passionate young man who testified before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee in 2011 about the proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in Iowa. You can view his testimony, which went viral here.

Zach is an Eagle Scout and he used the 12 principles/character traits he learned from the Boy Scouts for each of his chapters. He speaks about how his two moms taught him these lessons over and over throughout his life and shows what a positive influence they have had on him. The love you read from him, and the love between his two mothers you see through his eyes can leave no doubt in your mind that their family is just like anybody else's.

The book was an easy and enjoyable read and it is clear from Zach's arguments that he deserved the debate championship he won in high school. He is a remarkable young man and I am sure there are still amazing

things to come from. I highly recommend this book to everybody. I loved it and I guarantee you'll learn from it.

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### **Joan says**

I don't know that the writing deserves 4 stars to be real honest. However, the kid's courage and love deserves the 4 stars. He is a child of two parents who happen to be women. One is both his and his younger sister's biological mother. The other is her longtime partner who happens to be female. He states over and over again that his mothers' sexuality had no effect on his character. Their beliefs and moral stance had everything to do with his character, but not their sex. He adores the boy scouts, while admitting that he was lucky that his troop didn't care about what sex his parents were as long as he was being brought up in a moral fashion by boy scout standards. He made it to the top ranks of boy scout, Eagle Scout. His moms were with him every step of the way, more or less, since one developed MS and was in a wheelchair for a long time. Somehow she overcame the wasting disease but Zach says that disease had a much greater impact on him than her sexuality. He points out that legally, the oath "for better or for worse" didn't have any legal validity for his other mother but she stuck through the disease and never gave any thought to leaving a terribly upsetting, painful situation. His point was that the oath had real significance for her, but not because of legal obligations. He described the panic and frustration when the other mother rushed his little sister to the hospital with a broken arm. She couldn't authorize treatment for the kid, even though the kid had never known anyone else as a parent. This person is a nurse practitioner so really knew what was going on in both situations. He would be in favor of everyone having civil unions, with marriages reserved for religious institutions. He makes a decent point for this idea but I don't think that is the direction the country is moving in. The writing got somewhat repetitive but the young man is very earnest in his polemic and seems to be a lovely person well brought up which was his main point.

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### **Jessie Potts says**

Warning this book contains a same sex couple who feels like it's their right to be able to raise a child.

While that may seem like a dumb statement I feel like it should be said again. If same sex couples raising children isn't something you believe in, and you don't want to open your mind then pass on this book. For the rest of you out there this was a touching a sweet story of Zach Wahls and his two mothers.

Wahls was on the Daily show, which originally got me interested in reading his book. He seemed extremely confident, successful and more importantly happy; which is what any parent strives (or should strive) for their child to be. This is not his first time speaking on the issue of gay parenting, last year he added a new voice to the issue, one of the child in question being raised. He was so verbally eloquent that a book was a logical next step.

The book focuses on the different ideals he learned as an Eagle Scout, and how they are/were applied to his childhood and family. It was an interesting way to discuss gay parenting, by using the ideals of the traditional 'American Ideal', a boy scout. I think it also proves that in America there are many ways to describe family, and not every family who is 'different' is broken.

The book is easily read and contains many lessons as well as wisdom in dealing with adversity. While this book may not appeal to everyone, I feel like each person should pick up this or a similar story to really get the perspective from the people that gay parenting actually affects... the child/ren in question.

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### **Molly G says**

Even when you're already convinced of something, it's always good to keep expanding and refining your outlook. And sometimes it's just really cool and refreshing to hear/read things, which you may already think, expressed incredibly well. Plus, there's always more you hadn't thought of! Wahls's Speech & Debate and journalism experience show in his writing. Well constructed, well thought-out, well founded, and very engaging. There was a moment in the last third of the book where for some reason I felt myself lose momentum and wanted to stop reading, but I'm very glad I kept going to the end. (Keep in mind I read an Advance Reader Copy, which is not quite a final edit.)

It also makes me want to check out the parenting book he references, even though I don't have kids. Well done and very welcome!

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### **Kara Thomas says**

I first heard of Zach Wahls when his testimony went viral. I learned that he had written this book while watching The Daily Show. I put a copy on hold for myself from the library and I must say that it had the fewest amount of holds for any book that I have requested after seeing it on the Daily Show. I must say that I agree with him that one day I think my son's generation will wonder what the big deal was about allowing gay's the right to marry--just as I now do about segregation or interracial marriages. Even though, I have been open to the idea of gay marriage, I'd had strong feelings on their ability to raise a child, especially in the conservative Midwest. This book really made me challenge my thinking. It was well thought out and presented in a very logical manner. Sometimes the writing felt redundant, but I guess that is because at the heart of his argument, there was just one solid reason that he kept returning to. I challenge you to read this book and see how it makes you react as well.

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### **Zoe says**

I want to make it clear: I think Zach Wahls is a great guy. He's smart, articulate, brave, and endearing. He's got a great sense of humor and a nice, hard jawline. He would undoubtedly wipe the floor with me in any kind of serious debate, so I'm hoping I never find myself in one with him. That said, I have some problems with the paradigm of his book, *My Two Moms*, in which he shares stories about his childhood in a home with lesbian mothers, Terry and Jackie.

Their family's story is moving and Zach tells it beautifully and simply. Terry wanted children but didn't have a partner, so she got pregnant twice with the same sperm donor and had a boy, Zach, and, a few years later, a girl, Zabby. She faced several challenges, not just as a lesbian mother but as a single mother (for example, the local newspaper initially refused to run the announcement of Zach's birth in 1991 because she was an "unwed mother"). She met Jackie a few years later; they fell in love and had a traditional gay

commitment ceremony with a frustrating lack of legal bearing. Terry was diagnosed with MS in 2003, several years before she and Jackie were legally wed in Iowa. This meant that they faced humiliating hurdles in medical offices, including an excruciating night in the ER when doctors refused to listen to Jackie's recommendations for Terry's treatment.

So, what's my problem with this awesome, wholesome family overcoming the odds through love and faith?  
**[Read the rest of my review here](#)**.

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### **Sara says**

Fair warning: I am biased. I know this author. He babysits my kids. He even mentions he was supposed to babysit for us the night he went to speak at the Iowa House (on page 203). He is awesome and I hope he always connects with my kids and is someone they aspire to be like.

What I LOVE about the book itself is that he digs into his life experience with his family and illustrates the "values" his family has. It is beautiful. It gives me hope. And I truly hope his new campaign "Out to Dinner" works. I signed up, but am very unsure of who to invite as I live in a town where I truly do not know a lot of conservatives...

Anyway, the other thing I really love about the book is at the very end he "debates" common arguments against gay marriage. And every single one of them made so much sense to me. I hope this book can change some minds. Especially in that he proves that giving gay couples their full rights to marry and be equal, does not detract or infringe on anyone else's marriage/family.

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### **John says**

I really enjoyed this book. I love hearing people's stories and Zach definitely had a story to tell. He is very insightful for someone his age and does a great job putting his thoughts to paper. This is the story of Zach Walls who was raised by lesbian parents and through stories from his life he illustrates how he was raised with a good value system.

As another reviewer stated Zach does often interrupt one story to tell another one, from some other time in his life, and then return to the original story. This did not bother me as I think like this too at times. Also his writing is very good and easy to follow even during these points in his book.

The last page of the chapter section of his book contained one of many examples of how he tackles this subject very well. I have included it below.

"Opponents will often talk about the struggle and challenges that children of gay couples have to go through. I will say only this: We have to go through those challenges because you put us through them. We only have to experience that pain because you insist on inflicting it. By trying to tell us that there that there is something wrong with gay marriage, that there is something wrong with families led by gay couples, you create something wrong - you become the source of our pain."

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## **Sam says**

Objectively, I should give this book 4 stars: 5 for content, 3 for writing and pacing, but I'm letting my heart have the lion's share of the vote on this one.

First, my quibbles: the author uses the 12 principles/character traits he learned in Boy Scouting to talk about his upbringing and civil rights for gays. The problem is that he jumps all over the place chronologically, and it is very hard to keep track of what else is going on in his life at certain junctures. For example, he talks about wrestling with his mom's wheelchair on a blistering hot day, losing his temper, and being ashamed of himself; then, a few paragraphs later, he talks about his moms trying to keep her illness a secret from the kids. He refers a bunch of times to the difficulty that Tall Mom (love it!) had with her second pregnancy, but never tells that story. Perhaps it wasn't his to tell (Zebby, write a book!), but then don't refer to it at all.

However, I gave this 5 stars because I loved it. He makes all the arguments about marriage between two consenting adults being a right that is ingrained in our constitution, and then talks about how children of strong character are nurtured in a loving marriage, no matter what the gender or orientation of the parents may be. <3

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## **Carly Drake says**

Written by Zach Wahls, the son of a lesbian couple from Iowa, this book paints a picture of Zach's upbringing as an attempt to show the world (1) that his moms' sexuality had no bearing on his character, and (2) that he turned out just fine.

Let me just say that gay marriage is absolutely a non-issue to me. I'm on board. Let everybody get married already.

But this book was really awful. I read it in a hurry because I couldn't even handle the first page, but was committed to finishing it because it was a book club selection. I'll give you three - admittedly catty - reasons for my discontent:

1. The tone - The author wants to show you what a stand-up dude he's become, but ends up sounding really arrogant. I don't know how many times he reminded us that he's an Eagle Scout, but it was enough to make me queasy. I also know - once again, because he reminded me many times - that he has great grades, was accepted to prestigious colleges across the country, was on the debate team in high school, and is a hit with the ladies.

2. The "preaching to the choir" factor - I don't think the author really addressed his audience properly. I'm assuming that, like other readers, I picked up the book because I am in support of marriage equality. I can't see non-supporters jumping at the chance to read this book, but that's just me. Anyway, "My Two Moms" seemed to be repeatedly hitting me over the head with the same justifications for his cause, which got stale pretty quickly. I was looking for more than this, and was disappointed when the gist of the book didn't stray far from it (is that wrong of me?). My boyfriend, who is also reading this book, suggested that Zach's mom Terry's battle with MS was more interesting than a lot of the other stuff.

3. The unnecessary life tips - This book is structured around Boy Scout values, such as kindness, cleanliness, and bravery. Because this guy's life was indeed so normal, I believe he ran out of things to say and decided to give me lectures on having regular showers and keeping a good credit score. I felt like he was trying to teach me all these extra life lessons, and it was confusing and irritating.

I will say that this book needed to be written. It's an extremely important subject matter, and one I think the author handled with reverence and care (two more Boy Scout values!) but I wish it had more substance and less fluff/cheese. Sorry, Zach. I am in support of your cause, but can't really stand behind your writing.

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### **Steve Fox says**

This book is by the young man who was a YouTube sensation after testifying before the Iowa legislature about being raised by two moms - in support of same-sex marriage. He has a great story. The book doesn't capture it as well as his video - part of what makes his story great is that he's this tall, handsome, white, well-spoken young man in support of something that is all too often stereotyped. He busts all those stereotypes. A great message, but the book could do a much better job of telling the story. Many will like this book simply because it is by Zach Wahls. I'm not as impressed with this one.

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### **Heidi Gonzalez says**

I was moved when I saw Zach Wahls address the Iowa Judiciary Committee it was hard to believe he was only 19 years old. Wahls book is about his family. Growing up with two moms and how although he doesn't have anything to compare it to he thinks it wasn't too much different than the way a lot of kids grow up. Sure there were times when he was picked on, or bullied because his family was different and there were times when he hid that he had two moms because he didn't want to be seen as different, not that he was embarrassed by them he just wanted to fit in at that moment.

One of my favorite quotes of the book was "I'm not gay, but I know how it feels to be in the closet." This is such a profound statement. He has a unique perspective on what gay people deal with on a daily basis. He has seen his parents struggle for basic rights. But this book isn't just about having two moms, its about being a good person. Its about standing up for yourself but not at the expense of someone else. Its about opening your heart and your mind to differences and being open to listen. He may not change your mind on gay marriage or even gay parenting but I would find it hard to believe that anyone could say that this boy wasn't raised by two very loving parents who instilled in him an amazing value system, and taught him to appreciate the differences in everyone, even those you may not agree with.

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### **Victoria says**

A young man gives more than a glimpse into his family life comprised of two moms and a younger sister. His moms used a parenting book on values by the Mormon couple Linda and Richard Eyre to help lead discussions at dinner time on what was expected of their children and why. His moms were also active in the cub and troop level in scouting where Zach achieved the rank of Eagle. He points out that his family is like any other where the struggle, love, and try to be good citizens.

Zach also points out that the U.S. Supreme Court in the unanimous ruling of Loving V. Virginia, that

marriage is one of the "basic civil rights of man". So being able to marry the person you choose is a civil rights issue.

I liked his statement, "Your god may very well tell you that marriage is only between a man and a woman and that homosexuality is an abomination, but this is not a theocracy." And a little further on the same page, "...if the church can push its morality onto the state, the state will certainly inflict its morality onto the church."

He also has a separate section in the back for frequently asked questions and one with The Debate and the responses.

He does a wonderful job representing his family.

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