

**REVIEW BY CM MAGAZINE: JOANNE PETERS Retired teacher-librarian,  
Winnipeg Moving Out! A Young Adult's Guide to Living on Your Own  
Highly Recommended: 3.5/4 stars**

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Book Excerpt: "I am guessing that many young adults move out of very supportive homes and families that they enjoy as they make their way in the world. If you have a family that you enjoy being with, I would advise you to think about the positive aspects of staying at home for as long as you are able to. It is super-expensive and not exactly easy to try and make it out there on your own, especially if you are trying to get a university or college degree or your first home. Save up while you can! On the other hand, it can be a very rewarding experience to move out. You get an opportunity to learn and grow a lot. The bottom line is to trust your own feelings about what is right for you. "

Since the age of 17, Cindy Babyn has made over twenty moves and lived in a variety of environments (from urban to rural, basic to very comfortable). *Moving Out! A Young Adult's Guide to Living on Your Own* is the distillation of the independent living experience, her own as well as that of other young adults. Some young adults move out of necessity (attending college or school, or starting a new job in a location that is away from home), while others leave home out of unhappiness, anger, or desperate family circumstances. Whatever the case, few are prepared for the experience of independent living. In 117 pages, including appendices which provide contact telephone and/or web-site and e-mail addresses for a variety of government and social agencies and offices, ranging from residential tenancy dispute assistance to suicide prevention and addiction support services, Babyn covers the practical, social and emotional aspects of living on one's own, as well as a section covering taxation and a miscellany of issues associated with living in a major urban centre. The book is easily read, with plenty of point form lists, clearly formatted text, and both personal accounts of what it's like to move out and live independently, both positive and negative.

The first and longest section of the book is "Part I: The Practical Aspects of Moving and Living on Your Own Successfully". From the start, Babyn has her reader examine the pros and cons of living on one's own, before moving on to deal with all of the "nuts and bolts": finding a place, the real cost of living (always more than one expects it to be!), the "stuff you need" (yes, of course, you need a colander – how else are you going to drain the water from Kraft Dinner?), how to pack and get ready to move the stuff you have, as well as the stuff you will need, household organization, personal health care, insect and rodent elimination (a disgusting but real issue), finances, food shopping, and most surprisingly, a section on "end of life issues". Yes, death, the other inevitability of life, besides taxes. Many mature adults have a hard time considering this one, and most young people wouldn't even consider the need to make a will or have any experience with the process of planning a funeral. But, dealing with death is one of those "grown-up" things that all of us face, and the author is to be commended for putting this issue on the table.

Although attending college or university is a move which can place someone in a new social setting, and even when surrounded by people, there can be feelings of loneliness and real sadness. Part II, "The Emotional and Social Aspects of Living on Your Own," addresses this reality. Despite the initial excitement which can accompany this major life change, there is bound to be some real personal adjustment: "I was completely overwhelmed by moving out. I had left the rez, where I knew everyone and had a hundred cousins, to move to a place where I knew absolutely no one. I had had my first and only non-Native friend in grade 9 and going to college made me learn how to be open to meeting a whole lot of people who were not part of my culture." (p.75) Cynthia, the young woman who made this

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comment, goes on to express her pride at learning the skills of independent living, but there is no question that for some, learning how to develop new connections and new friendships is a huge challenge. Part II explores how to find opportunities for new personal connections, as well as how to negotiate the inevitable difficulties.

The final and shortest section of the book, "Income Tax, Eco-friendly Choices, and Principles for Living on Your Own in a Big Canadian City," is a potpourri of items which don't quite fit anywhere else in the book. No one likes paying taxes, but that's what pays for the many public services which Canadians take for granted. This section offers suggestions on keeping accurate financial records and on how to file. While Babyn suggests that the "safest thing to do is to hire a professional", this can be a rather costly option for someone on a tight budget. Most young people have relatively uncomplicated financial lives, and one of the computerized tax filing programs is probably a more cost-effective option. As well, many large cities have services to assist low-income earners (i.e. most young people on their own) with income tax filing.

So, who's the audience for this book? Obviously, it's a hands-on guide for any young person about to leave home, but it is also "must-reading" for any young person contemplating the big move, a parent or guardian who knows that their baby bird will be leaving the family nest and wants him or her to be prepared, and those working with young adults in counselling and support roles.

At \$14.95, the book is an incredible bargain, and I would certainly recommend that high school guidance departments purchase multiple copies, both for staff members and because the book is unlikely to be returned by students who borrow it. School libraries can purchase copies, but should be prepared to lose them. And parents, aunts and uncles might consider it as a high school graduation gift. Whether the big move happens sooner or later, the book's packed with good advice. Least likely to purchase the book on their own are those young adults who are leaving home in a state of crisis. Let's hope that someone else can give them a copy of Moving Out to help with the transition.