



Ready: Why Women Are Embracing the New Later Motherhood

Elizabeth Gregory

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Over the past three decades, skyrocketing numbers of women have chosen to start their families in their late thirties and early forties. In 2005, ten times as many women had their first child between the ages of 35 and 39 as in 1975, and thirteen times as many had their first between 40 and 44. Women now have the option to define for themselves *when they're ready* for family, rather than sticking to a schedule set by social convention. As a society, however, we have yet to come to terms with the phenomenon of later motherhood, and women who decide it makes sense for them to delay pregnancy often find themselves confronted with alarmist warnings about the dangers of waiting too long. In *Ready*, Elizabeth Gregory tracks the burgeoning trend of new later motherhood and demonstrates that for many women today, waiting for family works best. She provides compelling evidence of the benefits of having children later--by birth or by adoption. Gregory reveals that large numbers of women succeed in having children between 35 and 44 by the usual means (one in seven kids born today has a mom in that age range), and that many of those who don't succeed nonetheless find alternate routes to happy families via egg donation or adoption. And they're glad they waited. Without ignoring the complexities that older women may face in their quest to have children, Gregory reveals the many advantages of waiting: Stronger family focus: Having achieved many of their personal and career goals, new later moms feel ready to focus on family rather than trying to juggle priorities. More financial power: New later moms have established careers and make higher salaries. Greater self-confidence: New later moms have more career experience, and their management skills translate directly into managing a household and advocating for their children. More stable single-parenting: New later moms who are single have more resources. High marriage rate: On average, 85 percent of new later moms are married, lending stability to the family structure. Longer lives: Evidence indicates that new later moms actually live longer than moms who start their families earlier. Based on in-depth interviews with more than 100 new later moms and extensive collateral research, *Ready* shatters the myths surrounding later motherhood. Drawing on both the statistical evidence and the voices of the new later mothers themselves, Gregory delivers surprising and welcome news that will revolutionize the way we think about motherhood.

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