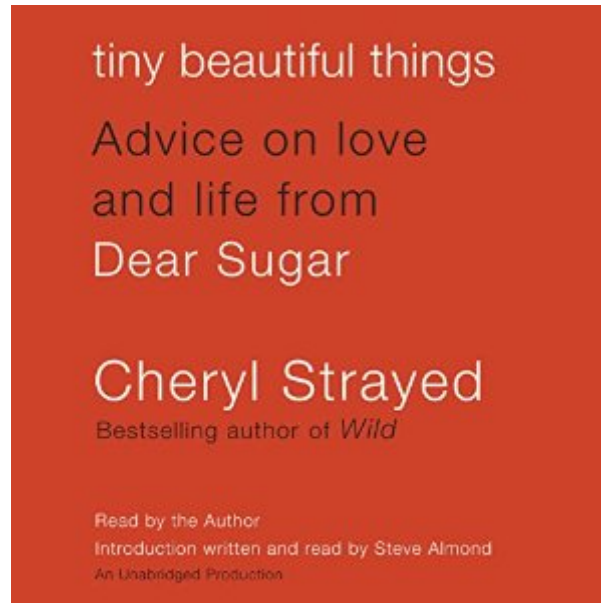


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# Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice On Love And Life From Dear Sugar



## Synopsis

Life can be hard: your lover cheats on you; you lose a family member; you can't pay the bills. And it can be great: you've had the hottest sex of your life; you get that plum job; you muster the courage to write your novel. Sugar-the once-anonymous online columnist at The Rumpus, now revealed as Cheryl Strayed, author of the best-selling memoir *Wild*-is the person thousands turn to for advice. *Tiny Beautiful Things* gathers the best of "Dear Sugar" in one place and includes never-before-published columns and a new introduction by Steve Almond. Rich with humor, insight, compassion-and absolute honesty-this book is a balm for everything life throws our way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've always been a sucker for advice columns--from gobbling up Ann Landers or Dear Abby columns in the newspaper to reading a collection of Dan Savage's columns in *Savage Love*. Reading people's letters scratches my voyeuristic itch, and I enjoy trying to think of what advice I would give for particular situations. *Tiny Beautiful Things* is a collection of letters and answers from the Dear Sugar advice column from the online magazine *The Rumpus*. In my mind, this is quite possibly the best advice column I've ever read. It transcends the short pithy advice of Ann and Abby and digs deeper than *Savage Love* (as well as being a bit less bawdy). What makes Sugar's advice so meaningful, fascinating and readable is that she shares herself and her life experiences (of which there have been many) in her answers. This makes her advice feel authentic and thoughtful. When she's writing about the difficulty of cutting off ties with a toxic parent, her advice rings true because

she's had to do it herself. When advising a woman to leave a relationship despite feelings of guilt, she shares the details of the demise of one of her own romantic relationships. By sharing her experiences and life lessons so candidly and openly, Sugar's advice feels like it is coming from a place of love and experience -- from a friend versus an advice columnist. Her loving-kindness is apparent throughout her responses (she routinely calls her letter writers "sweet pea"), and her advice always felt well-considered and spot-on. She rarely provides short answers, but takes the time to address each issue and to share the reasons why she is giving particular advice. As with the best advice, Sugar's responses are often simply reflecting a mirror back at the letter writer.

\*wow\* This book is from the writer, Cheryl Strayed Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail. It's a collection of various letters and the advice M's Strayed gave to her readers on theRumpus.net. This isn't like any advice columnist you've ever read before, with the possible exception of Dan Savage Savage Love: Straight Answers from America's Most Popular Sex Columnist. But Mr Savage's columns deal almost entirely with sex. M's Strayed's columns covers the whole emotional minefield of human emotions. "Sugar" is M's Strayed's pen name, like "Dear Abby" and "Dear Ann Landers" but her answers are totally different. "Sugar" reads and answers the questions that are asked as well as the unspoken questions. Reading Sugar is like getting advice from a trusted aunt or older girlfriend. I guess moms could give this advice, but I know this mom would be too emotionally involved with the situation to even think about anything intelligent to say. Sugar is not a shrink nor does she pretend to be one. She answers her readers carefully and lovingly. She also reveals huge chunks of her own life while giving the advice. And it's not like "Oh, darling, I have never mixed up the salad fork with the soup spoon and caused much shame to my mother-in-law. What were you thinking?". It's more like "Oh you did that? Here's a piece of my life that I think will resonate with you". And it's not about the time she got to ride on the pony outside of the drugstore so many times she puked.

We'll get to my title in a minute. Cheryl Strayed's advice column can be called "the Anti-Tweet." Here you find no self-conscious or cliché ridden sound bytes, thank God, but rather full-blown responses that mirror what life actually is: complex, deep, funny, heartbreaking, difficult and unpackageable. Not that she can't come up with the bon mot just. Quips she, "Your assumptions about the lives of others are in direct relation to your naive pomposity." Like that? If not, stick your ego back in its pouch for she proves her contention in every chapter. Strayed is a good writer who gives good advice in such a rare form that she ends up teaching you indirectly HOW to learn about

yourself. As the chapters fly by, you begin to get into the rhythm of how she sees what to pull out of a letter and why. This is easily transferred to any letter or journal entry you may write, giving you access to your own subconscious. As a writer, I was particularly moved by her advice to a woman writer who slanted the whole issue negatively, trying to unify women writers with suicide. Strayed put a stop to that right away, saying that was not the unifying theme of women writers. This was: "How many women wrote beautiful novels and stories and poems and essays and plays and scripts and songs in spite of all the crap they endured . . . and went right ahead and became better than anyone would have predicted or allowed them to be." Yeah! This is a blessing of a book. She counsels, "I suggest you forget about forgiveness for now and strive for acceptance instead." And lest the correspondent doesn't get it, continues, "Acceptance asks only that you embrace what's true." Particularly good and helpful is the chapter on whether to have a baby if you're single.

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