



All Things at Once

Mika Brzezinski

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As the co-host of MSNBC's popular morning show *MorningJoe*, Mika Brzezinski has established herself a leading political news journalist and beloved television personality. She daily interviews world leaders—Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John McCain—and discusses the major events of the day with guests like Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather, Andrea Mitchell, Chris Matthews, Maureen Dowd, and Tom Friedman.

But success hasn't always come easy for Mika. Growing up the only daughter of a former National Security Advisor, she struggled to find an identity in a family of over-achievers. She found her dream job early on and was hailed as the "It Girl" of CBS, only to be fired just a few short years later. After an unsuccessful stint as a stay-at-home mom, Mika went back to the workplace with encouragement from her 8-year-old daughter. She took a job that seemed a long-shot at best, and against all odds achieved the greatest success of her career. Now, in a time when many women are losing their jobs or struggling to find the perfect balance between work and home, Mika guides women of all ages to a place where they can find peace and fulfillment in their lives.

All Things at Once is a motivational book aimed at women, based on Mika's own personal and professional triumphs and failures—all of which have led her to her current position as one of television's most outspoken and respected journalists. Blending the personal with the prescriptive, Brzezinski's book will address the perpetual question of "having it all" when it comes to work and family; the importance of remaining equally humble in the face of great success and seemingly devastating setbacks; as well as the necessity of knowing and embracing our limitations so that we may transcend them.

In the tradition of Gail Sheehy's classic *Passages*, this illuminating book shows women how to reach their full potential in all areas of life, and at every stage of their journey. Readers will recognize their friends, their mothers, their daughters, and themselves in this refreshingly honest memoir.

All Things at Once Details

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From Reader Review All Things at Once for online ebook

Dana says

Mika Brzezinski is a co-host of "Morning Joe" and an MSNBC anchor. Brzezinski also reports on "NBC Nightly News" and is an alternating news anchor for "Weekend Today." Prior to joining MSNBC, Brzezinski was an anchor of the "CBS Evening News Weekend Edition" and a CBS News correspondent who frequently contributed to "CBS Sunday Morning" and "60 Minutes." In September 2001, she became CBS's principal "Ground Zero" reporter for the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. She is the daughter of former National Security Advisor and foreign policy expert Zbigniew Brzezinski. She is the mother of two children, and has been married to a journalist at ABC.

The above paragraph is from "About the Author" and recaps all the highlights of an amazing career. In this book Mika starts with her unusual childhood while living in the environs of the presidential family. Her family is unconventional. Her horse joined them in the house during Christmas. But her mother was an inspiration to Mika, giving her the impetus to having it all.

This book goes beyond the recapitulation of her career and rather provides an analysis into her successes and failures. Mika's life has been a series of ups and downs. Some failures were trying to have everything just too soon and some successes just plain being in the right place at the right time. Mika has an amazing ability to look at her life and determine where she went wrong. Her life is full of stress and not everyone will agree with all her choices but one can not help but admire a woman so in tune with her own desires, wants and needs.

I enjoy reading about other people's lives but this book also delves into the why which makes it that much more interesting.

Peggy says

I enjoy seeing Mika on the T.V. show Morning Joe, so I wanted to know more about her. She is the daughter of Zbigniew Brzezinski who was the National Security Adviser during the Carter presidency. The best part of the book was the section her growing up years and what her family life was like at that time.

If you've ever seen the movie Up Close and Personal, you'll have an idea of what Mika's professional life has been like. Several times she's had to claw her way up through the dog-eat-dog world of professional broadcast journalism, while at the same time trying to maintain her home life, complete with husband and children.

I was disappointed that the author had a collaborator on this book. I would have preferred that she wrote the entire book on her own. I'm sure that she could have. However, time constraints in her busy life necessitated this move.

Joanne says

Brzezinski is apparently half of the Morning Joe show, which I've never seen, and a longtime TV journalist. This memoir is about her life as a working mother with a pretty intense schedule. (To do a morning TV show, apparently she has to get up at 2 a.m.) She's got some very general practical advice - have children

young, for example, keep work and home separate. Apparently she has quite the support network at home (a nanny is mentioned, but not the household management stuff). She addresses the "mommy wars" only briefly. She doesn't seem to be very reflective -- she probably doesn't have time to be reflective -- and that hurts the depth that this book *could* have.

The book's kind of choppy written, and I think she's so immersed in the TV business that she forgets that most readers don't know news terminology or procedure. So it's a quick read, and mildly interesting, but nothing that sets my world on fire.

CD says

A story that probably deserves a better rating, but sidles up alongside desperation to the extent that it is irritating. The professional journalist come out clearly in Brzezinski's story evidenced in the clean style of writing. Yet -

While M.B. relates a very personal tale of conflicted allegiance and herstory that led to a series of critical moments, there remains not only the desperation but also distractedness. The morning television program that she see's as *'the best job ever'* that features her illustrates more of this distracted, almost uninvolved, behavior may lead the reader and viewer to view her as an observer. A strange position for a mother and professional television regular to inhabit. But that is this story in many ways.

Brzezinski during the promotional swing for this work gave interviews on both competitive morning talkers and on the late night/alt-channel circuit with the like of Koppel and Rose that revealed far more than critical portions of this work. If any major flaw jumps out, it is the failure of editors to shape portions of the book to have a greater emotional impact than genuinely comes across.

Without the backdrop of interviews or having seen her other recent work on television, this could probably be 'better'. Viewed in that light it is disappointing. Certainly on its own the book launches into the 3 stars range whether or not the reader liked it or found it disturbing.

The story of not supermom or superwoman revealed, but mom who wasn't super and decided to focus after that discovery on something else. Her decisions, herstory, her fate. A unique (a nice phrasing) take on a difficult set of choices in the 20/21st century that others have wound up doing the same thing and told a more positive tale.

Good news is that I think that *'the kids are alright'*!

LaurieH118 says

To look at Mika and me, you wouldn't think we have that much in common. I'm not a morning news celebrity, I'm not married and I'm not a mother. But what Mika and I share -- and we no doubt share these things with many other women -- is the agita we put ourselves through. The self doubt. The self-imposed deadlines. I'm proud that I made all the professional deadlines, sometimes melancholy about missing the personal ones, and always, like Mika, working hard to be "the shiny penny" and impress family, my coworkers and supervisors.

Reading how Mika dealt with her burnout, I recalled my own. Like Mika, I took a step down the ladder

(though not as steep as the one she took), to help relocate my serenity.

So this book, really a very quick read, is like spending time with a good friend, one who is freer with the empathy and her own experiences than she is with ideology.

Samantha says

I am not for sure "why" I decided to purchase this memoir. All Things at Once, was NOT on my reading list. I'm not a Mika Brzezinski fan. I know very little about this woman, except I see her on the television while I am at the gym. I just have a new found love for memoirs and I bought this book on a whim. I don't hate this memoir, but I don't exactly love it either, I guess I fall somewhere in the middle and can say, "It was o.k."

From what I can gather Mika wants to drive a central point to women of having, "All Things at Once." The career, the husband, the children, and the other things you want to achieve. She even advocates women to have children, if motherhood is your heart's desire don't forsake it as something to be done later down the road, once all of your other ducks have been set in a row. She then goes on further to describe her remarkable childhood, her start in television, getting married, parenting failures (we all have them), and making important career decisions.

Overall, there were some great elements to this story. They say that everyone in life has a path? Well, if her future was a direct conduit from the affluence of her childhood, then no doubt her destiny/purpose would prove to be nothing less than fantastic. I don't personally know anyone directly who can say they had playdates with First Daughter, Amy Carter, sleepovers at Camp David, dinner guests like Pamela Harriman, an encounter with Pope John Paul II, and much more. Who can even say that their ancestral lineage is Presidential? Ummmm, Mika can! I really loved learning about her family, the distinct way her parents raised Mika and her brothers to be goal orientated and independent thinkers. Her childhood, even the ways of her eccentric mother, was nothing short of amazing.

The memoir then goes on to describe her career. Seeking opportunities, walking through every open door. The Vice President of NBC news chastising her appearance and a need for a makeover was hilarious. I can't believe she was willing to be so honest about it. Being a moderator for a CBS Up to the Minute news special, covering 9/11, 60 Minutes, working with Ashleigh Banfield and Gina Gaston. She covered a lot of her career and was very forthcoming about setbacks, mistakes, and successes.

In the midst of describing her career, Mika also discusses the balancing act of being a parent. Like any other parent, she encounters pitfalls. An injury to her baby girl, taking out loans for babysitting costs, self-proclamation to missing major milestones and events in the lives of her children for the pursuit of her a career. This is the part of the story that fell short for me. I just couldn't identify with these choices. Nor could I identify with advocating a woman to have children in the pursuit of having, "All Things At Once." As a parent, this element being a grand theme of the book was a slippery slope for me.

All that being said, the read was o.k. Reading about her childhood was remarkable. Learning about her career was interesting. Her thoughts on advocating motherhood while juggling marriage and a career, I wasn't entirely on board with. My idea of a GOOD READ is my desire to advocate a friend by saying, "You need to read this book!" I just wouldn't say that about this one. It was o.k. but I wouldn't identify it as great.

Rachel says

I had to add a new shelf specifically for this book - abandoned. As a former devoted Morning Joe viewer, I was actually excited to read this book. This became harder and harder to read as I dreadfully turned each page. Mika, as on air, is ice cold and clinical as she tells her life story. The intro gets you - it's told so well, but the rest is a calculated emotionless observation on how great her life is. She manages to make an attempted rape sound like reading a grocery list... The kicker for me was on my way into the office this morning, reading about how Mika is so right for having her babies and husband when she did and anyone else that does it differently is just well, wrong. Yes, there are risks for having a baby beyond 30 - but there are risks for just having babies. And not everyone meets Mr. Right when they are 23, Mika! That chapter was so self-serving and so judgmental - I really don't care about the rest of what's happened in her life. Because her personality already tells me. I actually went to a booksigning for this book and she was so cold to me then. It should have been a sign to return it...

Jennifer says

I love Morning Joe and was curious about Mika and her career. There were times I wished I hadn't learned more; sometimes there was an arrogance to the advice she offers about marrying and having your kids earlier rather than later in life. So much of that is timing, biology, and luck that I wanted to respond to this advice with "How nice for you!"

It's always interesting for me to read about women for whom their career is their passion. Before I had children, I was a teacher and it was indeed a passion for me. But after having kids, I found that my passion really was staying home with them. Mika does a great job of skirting the "Mommy Wars" by focusing on who she is - she knows herself well and working is part of who she is. For a woman who is a journalist, I wish I had found it more well-written, particularly since she had written it with someone else. I felt that events were described in a paragraph and then needlessly rehashed in the next - like how a soap opera opens with the last scene of yesterday's episode. Towards the end, she described some of her past jobs as "bad boyfriend" jobs - a really terrific metaphor that stuck with me until the end. I was surprised by some things she included, and others that she glossed over.

I still don't know if she'd be someone I could hang with - but I do know that for me, it actually reinforced being a stay-at-home mom. It's my job - and it's one I love - so I guess if I could express that after reading her book - it wasn't a bad read at all!

Meijer Bjorn says

I enjoy reading about others lives, even when I know very little about them. That was the case when I decided to read Mika Brzezinski's, "All Things At Once." I became a little worried when the marketing of the book was focused on career women. I have the wrong plumbing and I am perfectly satisfied working with my wife in her in-home childcare business. With that said, I went into this book wanting to provide insight relevant to anyone interested in Mika's book.

"All Things at Once," by Mika Brzezinski reads much like how she describes her career. It starts out with the intention of doing great things. The focus of the book is pretty rough with signs of promise. There are parts that are good and others that fall short. By the last third of the book, the memoir comes into its own. It

pulled me in and began to tug on me in an emotional way.

The beginning of the book takes a glimpse at Mika's childhood. It is interspersed with mentions of her career. Mika's father was the national security adviser during the Carter administration. Her family in all aspects were country folk that enjoyed hunting and had a lifestyle far removed from the Washington socialite scene they had become apart of. The memoir glances over this information, which if given more detail would have been excellent reading.

Mika goes on to highlight the start of her career. She discusses her choices that created a hectic and stressful life. All this leads to an accident that made Mika take a closer look at her decisions. This becomes a vital turning point in her life. Mika's family dynamic is different from the typical two working parent household. The demands put on Mika and her husband, because of their careers, creates an environment that may shock some reading the book.

As Mika details her first move to MSNBC, the focus of the book becomes clearer and the story begins to hold my interest better. Her experiences in the latter part of her career are detailed in a way that was very interesting and moving.

As described in the book, Mika stretches herself quite thin. With this in mind she put together a good memoir. If Mika had more time to dedicate to her book, it could have been great. Overall, I enjoyed the honest and telling look into her life. I would recommend it to anyone, not just career minded women.

Meijer Bjorn, Reviewer for Bookpleasures.com

Sondra says

I was drawn to this book because I absolutely love "Morning Joe" which Mika co-hosts with Joe Scarborough. If you are expecting Mary Karr "Liar's Club" quality memoir writing--don't. Overall I really enjoyed Brzezinski's book, even with her continual 'shiny penny' metaphor. What I found interesting was Mika's feeling that she had to be everything--living up to the woman as 'superwoman' ideal, that came after 2nd wave Women's Movement in the 1970's. It was a prevalent and constant message to the 80's and 90's working mother, and she clearly tried and failed (in a very positive way) to emulate this ideal. Brzezinski is a an excellent role model for my generation of women, who are continually renegotiating our careers up against the expectations/desires of wifedom and parenthood. She gives a very realistic approach, and demonstrates how mistakes and setbacks can be some of the most critical moments that define a much better future. She reinvented herself after forty, which is virtually unheard of in her industry, and she has the scars to prove it. My kind of gal.

Kim Hurson says

Very easy to read, surprisingly candid, what every working woman and mother can identify with and to

John Hendricks says

Mika Brzezinski is currently the co-host of MSNBC's Morning Joe. I thought the book may have more of a "how to balance children and career" advice, but it was mostly a straight-forward account of her life. There's minimal name-dropping and the 911 material was handled well. For the most part, however, I wouldn't bother with this one...

thewanderingjew says

Mika Brzezinski has written an honest and warm, easy to read memoir of her climb to fame. One almost feels that they have become a personal friend, as they gather up the pages of her life. Although still quite young, she has had so many diverse experiences in her childhood and career that there is plenty to include in her story.

Raised by a stern father and an artistic and creative, possibly eccentric, mother she was nevertheless always in an atmosphere filled with love and acceptance. She was encouraged to be the best she could be and she always aspired to that goal but added an additional codicil. She wanted to be the be-all to everyone, an impossible combination since some sacrifices always have to be made in one area or another in order to achieve success. Humans don't have the time or the capacity to do it all well. Something will suffer in the effort and, many times, she explains how something certainly did, often reducing her to tears.

Frolicking in the White House as a youngster with the likes of Amy Carter certainly would not be considered a mainstream childhood but Mika seems to have taken it all in stride. Her mom encouraged her to be herself and often, "herself", brought considerable embarrassment to the family, in public situations. She was always appreciated for whom she was, though, and was expected to achieve while remaining true to herself.

In her teens, she discovers a love for journalism and begins early, to pursue it. In her twenties, finding the love of her life, a soul mate, also pursuing the same career, she marries Jimmy Hoffer and begins to raise a family. Her life seems like "everymans". Living on a shoestring they move from one small apartment to another fixer-upper of a home, from locale to locale, making the adjustments necessary to further their careers and maintain some kind of home life. Equally supporting of each other, the marriage survives. For Mika, however, the pressure rises to a boiling point since being perfect in all ways, seems to be her compulsive aim. Until the time when a tragedy occurs, as she tumbles down the stairs with her infant, she does not really fully understand how her inability to place things in the proper perspective is hurting her. She is driven by ambition. She is driven by a need to be the perfect everything, wife, mother, journalist, et al. Although she claims that she has gotten ahead, in some respects, a leg up, because of who she is, though she has never curried those favors, one can't help but notice that she kept her name, Brzezinski, one that does not get lost in the shuffle of obscurity, rather than assuming her husband's name, Hoffer. However, Mika, is very much interested in women's issues and perhaps, in fairness to her, I might give her the benefit of the doubt and assume it was for that reason that she kept her own name, not for personal advantage. She certainly climbed up to the top, from the basement, and took the worst jobs at the worst times of day or night for reporting, so one does have to give her enormous credit. The need for hard work and effort have never stopped her, in fact, they seem to encourage her in her pursuit of her dream. Her descriptions of life, in the newsroom and television world, are right on. It exposes the cutthroat atmosphere that is its reputation, as real. Friends will "eat" friends in order to get ahead. She will not sign on to that behavior but does admit that, at times, she may have spoken once too often in order to impress someone, only to fall to earth rather quickly as a result.

Today, she is a rising star or perhaps her star has already risen. She works side by side with Joe Scarborough on MSNBC's Morning Joe and is charming, witty and warm, exactly how she presents in her memoir. If I had to describe the book with adjectives I would say it is friendly, open and honest. You will feel as if you are her personal confidant as you read it and when you close the book you will think you know her. She has embraced you with her words and you will embrace her. She is tough, driven, emotional, conflicted, happy

and sad at times, happily married for two decades, a concerned and devoted parent but a person with her own needs to satisfy, as well. She is everyone rolled into one and she is beautiful to boot, very easy on the eyes, a necessary ingredient on the path she has chosen to travel. Her book is the same, easy on the eyes and a pleasure to read.

Alex Schwerdt says

I really like this book, mostly because i felt like i could relate to her on a level. I don't have kids, but i know how it feels to have a million things going on and trying to balance it all. Mika is intelligent and impressive with what she has been able to accomplish and I feel like she can teach me a thing or two.

Leeanna says

All Things at Once, by Mika Brzezinski

The best part of this book is Mika's honesty, especially her no-holds barred recounting of a terrible accident with her and her baby, caused due to Mika's exhaustion of stretching herself too thin. But that's really the only positive of this book - it's very short, doesn't contain much of substance, and just generally left me wondering what I had read.

The message Mika's trying to promote is don't wait to have children, and that you can have all things at once...but the message isn't very effective. Admitting that she doesn't see her children all that much (in fact, while covering the events of September 11, 2001, she didn't see them for 20+ days), it appears as if the children are mostly taken care of by domestic help. Mika even writes about an experience where her nine-year-old daughter scheduled her own dentist appointment, rather than waiting for mommy to get around to it. Her year of being a stay-at-home mother failed miserably, as she couldn't cook, do laundry, houseclean, and thought that helping them with homework was hard. She admits she preferred being the "fun" parent, doing water balloon parties or such to make up for missing important events in her kids lives. Mika says she isn't cut out to be a full-time, stay-at-home mother, so I wonder why she wanted kids at all. She wrote about wanting them, and wanting a family in her early 20s, but never said exactly why.

The most interesting parts to me were the descriptions of Mika's parents, Emilie and Zgibniew. It sounds like they had a fascinating home life, and encouraged their children to pursue academics and other interests. I would've preferred to read a book about either of them more than their daughter.

I'm left wondering if she got a book deal only because of "Morning Joe's" popularity; is Willie Geist next in the lineup?

1/5.
