

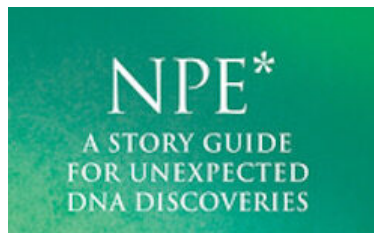


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A New Guide for NPEs & MPEs

An NPE and journalist offers guidance for people affected by DNA surprises

December 10, 2021



Everyone who's had a DNA surprise will recognize themselves in the pages of LeeAnne R. Hay's *NPE* A Story Guide for Unexpected Discoveries*. Hay, a freelance journalist who's earned certificates from the University of Florida College of Social Work, has crafted a memoir/guidebook hybrid, drawing substantially from her own NPE story and those of others to illustrate common experiences and issues that arise when family secrets are revealed and individuals learn that the families in which they were raised may not be their families of origin.

In 2017, on a whim, Hay purchased a DNA test, the results of which were shocking. Not only did she learn that the man who raised her was not her father, she discovered at the same time that her biological father was a man she'd known and loved since she was a child. And there began a quest to learn as much as she could about her origins, her ethnicity, and how such a monumental secret could have been kept from her. She felt rage toward her mother, by then deceased, bewilderment about her ethnic identity, and, soon, an overpowering sense of anger and helplessness.

If you've had a DNA surprise, these feelings likely will be all too familiar, and Hay offers the much-needed comfort that comes from knowing that you're not the only one whose ever had these experiences and emotions or the only one who doesn't know which way to turn. She offers gentle guidance about the range of situations and complications that may arise, from how to communicate an NPE discovery to others, how to use DNA to search for family, how to communicate with new relatives, and how to contemplate and make a name change, as well as the steps needed to move forward. She addresses the emotional pitfalls, including isolation, loss, and grief, and the repercussions for others who are affected by an MPE's discovery. In addition to noting helpful resources, Hay also advises readers about the need to carefully assess resources to determine if they are truly helpful, expert-based, and reputable.

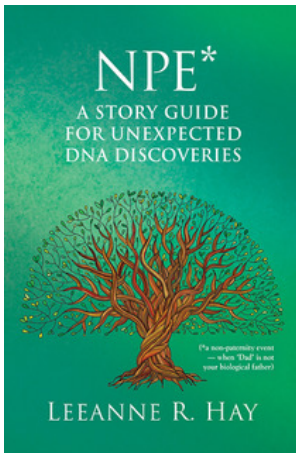
Although the book is written for MPEs and offers strategies for navigating the journey toward understanding, healing, and hope, its greatest strength may be as a guide for friends and family members, both families of origin and birth families. MPEs often rightly complain that no one understands what the experience is really like and struggle to express their feelings. Others may not understand and may believe that the MPE is overly sensitive or exaggerating the impact. Hay makes it clear that isn't the case and advises people contacted by MPEs how to receive them with grace and

understanding. This important aspect of the book can go a long way toward increasing awareness and understanding of the NPE/MPE experience and the needs of individuals in the wake of a DNA surprise.



A compassionate and clear-eyed guide to a challenging subject, it's likely to inspire others to help fill the knowledge void and shine more light on the needs of NPEs and MPEs.

Leanne R. Hay is an award-winning freelance journalist whose work has appeared in newspapers, magazines, and literary journals. She's a graduate of Villanova University, with a BA in history and minors in sociology and criminal justice. While researching this book, she earned professional certificates from Florida State University College of Social Work in Trauma & Resilience. She lives in Texas with her husband and their miniature Schnauzer rescue pup Arfie. Visit her [website](#) and follow her on [Twitter](#). Find the book [here](#).



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