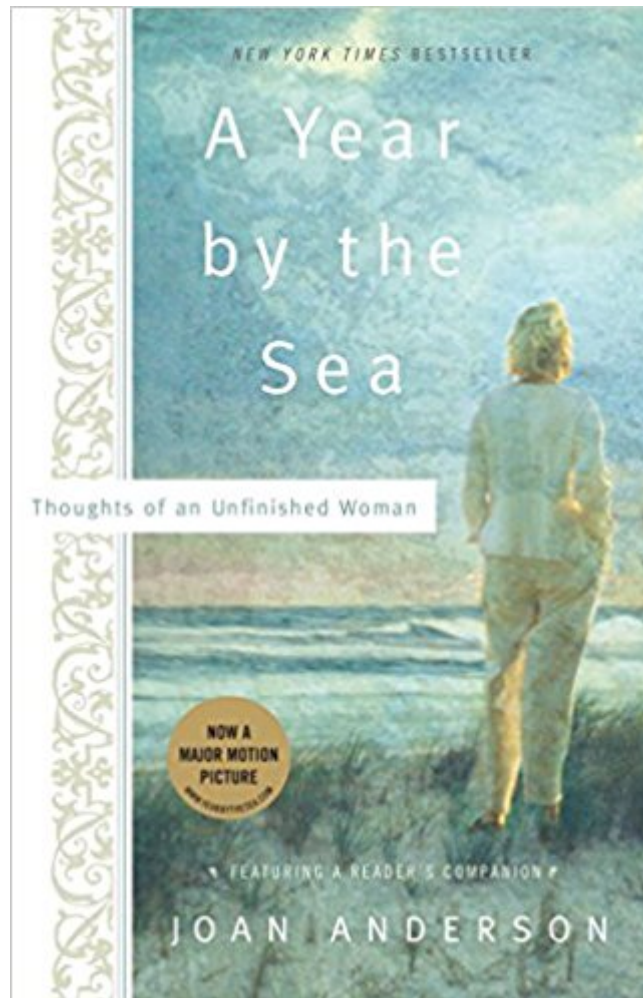




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# **A Year By The Sea: Thoughts Of An Unfinished Woman**



## Synopsis

The basis for the *Å* Å major motion picture of the same name. *Å* Å An entrancing memoir of how one woman's journey of self-discovery gave her the courage to persevere in re-creating her life. Life is a work in progress, as ever-changing as a sandy shoreline along the beach. During the years Joan Anderson was a loving wife and supportive mother, she had slowly and unconsciously replaced her own dreams with the needs of her family. With her sons grown, however, she realized that the family no longer centered on the home she provided, and her relationship with her husband had become stagnant. Like many women in her situation, Joan realized that she had neglected to nurture herself and, worse, to envision fulfilling goals for her future. As her husband received a wonderful job opportunity out-of-state, it seemed that the best part of her own life was finished. Shocking both of them, she refused to follow him to his new job and decided to retreat to a family cottage on Cape Cod. At first casting about for direction, Joan soon began to take pleasure in her surroundings and call on resources she didn't realize she had. Over the course of a year, she gradually discovered that her life as an "unfinished woman" was full of possibilities. Out of that magical, difficult, transformative year came *A Year by the Sea*, a record of her experiences and a treasury of wisdom for readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I'm beginning to think that real growing only begins after we've done the adult things we're supposed to do," confides Anderson, a journalist and author of children's books (*Twins on Toes*,

etc.). She came to this conclusion after a year living alone in a cottage on Cape Cod. Feeling that her marriage had stagnated by the time her two sons were grown, Anderson surprised and distressed her husband by refusing to move out-of-state with him when he accepted a new job. In this accessible memoir, she shares the joy and self-knowledge she found during her time of semi-isolation. In order to supplement the income from her royalty checks, she found a job in the local fish market and began making new friends who sustained her. After her hot water heater broke down and her husband refused to help, she earned the additional money for the repair by digging and selling clams. Through vivid and meticulous observations about the natural world, Anderson makes clear her strong affinity for the ocean, with its changing tides, subtle colors and burgeoning life. A Memorial Day reunion brought Anderson and her husband closer; shortly thereafter she embraced his plan to retire and live with her in the cottage. Anderson has recently begun a "Weekend by the Sea" program for women who need time to reflect. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Curling up with this autobiography will refresh readers' souls and adjust their attitudes. With their two sons grown and married, Anderson and her husband decided to take a "vacation" from their long marriage. Her husband moved on to a new job hundreds of miles away, while Anderson cocooned herself in her rusting Volvo and drove to her family's cottage on Cape Cod. During the year-long separation, Anderson reestablished her connection to nature and was able to discover new hope. She swam with seals, ran a marathon, worked in a fish market, and earned extra income clamming. Activities that gave her the opportunity to shed her image as family nurturer and allowed her to grow as an independent woman. After a Memorial Day reunion, her husband retired from his job to live with Anderson on Cape Cod. Anderson's story reminds readers not to overlook their personal needs when providing for family members. This is a good choice for discussion and a companion piece to Anne Morrow Lindbergh's classic *Gift from the Sea*. A Joyce Sparrow, St. Petersburg P.L., FL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was fully prepared not to like this book. Wrapped in my own grief and pain, I have read many light and trivial books in an attempt to escape. This book grew on me. Weaving its way into my mind and soul, asking me to step outside myself and look around. In some intangible ways I was sad when I finished the story. What happened next? Did life continue to open and change for her? Were they able to relax together at last? Then I was struck by the thought that the next part of the story is

about me, not them. How will I live into the moment and what will I surrender so that something may die and something may be born in me? Thank you, Joan, for opening the door.

I can see me where she was looking for the answers of my life .looking to feel free and happy . The beach and the ocean is where I feel the most relaxed I want that little cottage and everything that goes with it. I felt like I was with her in her journey. I'm on to read her next book this was my first.

I bought this book because it was made into a movie (which I've not seen). While it was easy to read, it was NOT a compelling story. The main character JOAN is a wife & mother of grown children. When her husband takes a job in another city, Joan decides to move to their cottage in Cape Cod. The story is about her journey in re-discovering herself. The book was OK but I would NOT recommend.

I would not say that I didn't enjoy reading this book, only that I came away from it with thoughts almost the opposite of what I would have expected. I am nearing 50 myself, and having raised a large family, I am interested in books that offer ideas for what happens next. I also find the idea of some time away from the busyness of my household very appealing. I am completely on board with the idea that a woman (or a man for that matter) needs to re-evaluate and even re-invent themselves at this point in life. The author has a ridiculously overwrought style- several other reviewers have mentioned that nearly every paragraph contains a metaphor meant to be extremely deep, but which is in reality an attempt to imbue the most mundane of thoughts with cosmic metaphysical import. I found upsetting the complete lack of respect and compassion that she has for her husband of many years- and while she keeps claiming that she has been a devoted and self sacrificing wife and mother, it is her obsession with her own thoughts and feelings that comes across most clearly. You get a more than a glimpse of her true character, and I pity her daughters-in-law- her desire to control and know the details of her sons' lives is disturbing. Most disturbing to me was the older woman- Joan Erickson- who miraculously appears in her life in this semi- deserted seaside town. The woman may be another metaphor, this time for a wiser and more mature Joan Anderson, but I believe she is supposed to be a tangible person, and as such is very unbelievable. Pearls of wisdom fairly drip every time she opens her mouth- most of them as shallow and forced as the rest of the dialogue in the book. As a fiber artist I have to say that the dialogue between them when she teaches Joan to weave is ludicrous- another overused metaphor of the threads being the threads of one's life. Please. Sometimes thread is just... thread. I came away from the book still

longing for my own year (or month) by the sea, with a few insights, but mostly the feeling that I'm glad I'm nothing like the author, and very thankful for my husband, who, like the author's husband, is a really decent guy.

This was a compelling, thought provoking read. I found myself relating to the author's emotional responses and wishing I had a cottage by the sea that I could retreat to, I look forward to reading and absorbing more of Joan Anderson.

I wonder if a year was enough time for all the need of change she encountered? It was presented as so in her conclusions; yet, I wondered if more time on her own might have helped both her and her husband. :) There were several stirring moments, though, and her experiences with the seals, in the fish market, on the beach in the snow, and as a clam digger were described evocatively. Thank you, Ms. Anderson, for inviting in, the reader :). Sharing intimate thoughts seems like a challenging thing to have accomplished..

Ms. Anderson writes well, capturing phrases that remain with the reader. In any book that seems to bring personal moments public, one would perhaps do more than quibble about revelations that aren't necessarily praise worthy. A sense of estrangement between author and children in particular brings thoughts of ego fulfillment that haven't anything to do with knitting together the needs of a family. The portrayal of the husband at the end doesn't bring cheers from this reader; he seems weak and in need of some firm control. Was this what author sought through the year? Granted, writer learns of physical deprivation to a great extent; and tenuous relationships exist with the locals, but somehow at the end, one wonders if the year answered all of her questions.

This was a book I had read "every woman over 50 should read" so I was drawn to read it...especially when I found out that it was a memoir...which I love to read. It is a short read...that I didn't want to put down and related to throughout the book. Joan Anderson has a way of writing her thoughts and experiences in a way that is easy to relate to and visualize. Her writing gives thought provoking questions about our own lives...our view of self and marriage. I felt like I knew her...and wished that I had.

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