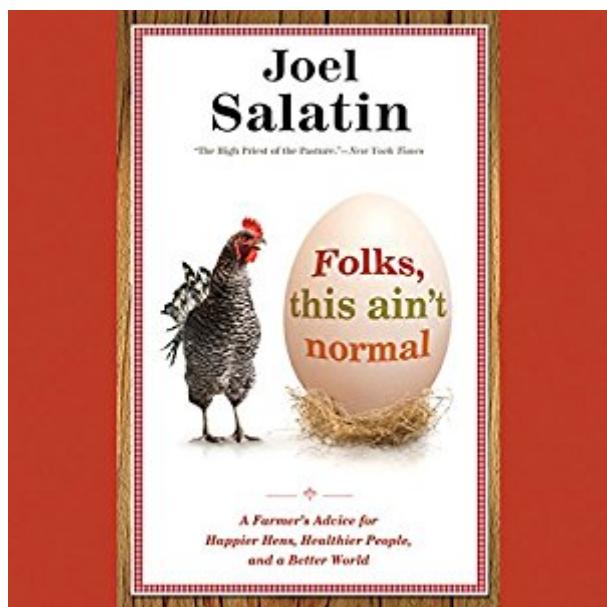


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Folks, This Ain't Normal: A Farmer's Advice For Happier Hens, Healthier People, And A Better World



Synopsis

From farmer Joel Salatin's point of view, life in the 21st century just ain't normal. Here, he discusses how far removed we are from the simple, sustainable joy that comes from living close to the land and the people we love. Salatin has many thoughts on what normal is and shares practical and philosophical ideas for changing our lives in small ways that have big impacts. >Salatin, hailed by the New York Times as "Virginia's most multifaceted agrarian since Thomas Jefferson [and] the high priest of the pasture", and profiled in the Academy Award-nominated documentary Food, Inc. and the best-selling book The Omnivore's Dilemma, understands what food should be: wholesome, seasonal, raised naturally, procured locally, prepared lovingly, and eaten with a profound reverence for the circle of life. And his message doesn't stop there. From child-rearing to creating quality family time, to respecting the environment, Salatin writes with a wicked sense of humor and true storyteller's knack for the revealing anecdote. Salatin's crucial message and distinctive voice - practical, provocative, scientific, and down-home philosophical in equal measure - makes Folks, This Ain't Normal a must-listen book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Absolutely brilliant book about the "ways things outta be". Through great stories and lots of information, author Joel Salatin invites you on a journey to rediscover the roots of America. This isn't a "let's go back to the way things used to be" book. Up to date scientific data and research provide rich analysis of the best of now and yesteryear farming practices. Some of the information was a bit

above me, but still enlightening. Mr. Salatin will cause you to rethink our industrial food market, among many other things. You will be challenged reading this book. You will be inspired as well. Thank you to the author for pouring his heart and soul into such a great work.

I grew up in the burbs, far enough from the city not to have any city troubles but also far enough from any working farms to have zero experience with them too. Reading this book helps highlight a few things that we consider the standard but in comparison to our ancestors, and I am thinking like 2 gens back at the most, would seem so foreign to them as to be unrecognizable. If you like the idea of family, self sustainably and personal and community responsibility read this book. If you have never raised and killed an animal for food, picked something from the garden for lunch that afternoon or have memories of hearing a story told by grandpa around a fire in the evening, this book should be a bit of an eye opener. Yea, when it comes to Joel and his beliefs, I have drank the cool aide and think that not normal is such a standard today I don't see how to get back to those days without a lot of disturbance.

Reading this work of knowledge has brought so many memories of growing up in a rural farming community. I loved how Joel brought out the common sense along side the scientific principles of sound sustainable farming practices. Although this is not a exhausted list of resources it is full fundamental techniques and general knowledge that an average Joe could grasp and build upon. Thanks for this great and much needed resource. I felt like I was sitting on the front porch talking over the wonders of nature laughing, nodding and shaking my head.

In his introduction, Allan Nation says Salatin pulls no punches, which "completely discombobulates" audiences who expect a slow-local food advocate to be a leftist hippie. In this book, Salatin proudly displays his religiosity, his social conservatism, and his political libertarianism -- so much so, in fact, that these elements threaten to distract the reader from his central point. That point is that a food system dominated by multinational corporations, in which local production is seen as eccentric and local markets are discouraged by heavy-handed regulation, is fundamentally abnormal and in the long run, suicidal. And that historically, extended, multigenerational families that produce much of their own food are normal. Salatin is arguing for old-fashioned values he calls "connection, heritage, tradition." I agree with him on all these points. The book is really a series of essays that all circle around this central theme. Some of them are excellent, and would probably work well as free-standing articles or as chapters to read in a class (Environmental History, for instance).

"Children, Chores, Humility, and Health" is one of these. It begins with a discussion of firewood that dwells on the physical details and shows an intimate knowledge of the subject drawn from a lifetime of experience, and then continues to a discussion of freedom, responsibility, and growing up on a farm. And it provides this point, for grounding the discussion: "As recently as 1946, nearly 50 percent of all produce grown in America came out of backyard gardens." Salatin makes a bunch of really good points, which for me are slightly marred by the number of times he says "Jesus never said" this or that. I got the point about the food police without needing to read quite so much about how Salatin and his friends have been inconvenienced by the USDA and FDA. And calling Abraham Lincoln "an idiotic dreamer" is going a bit far beyond what was needed to make his point. This type of "pulling no punches" just annoys and alienates people. I'm surprised Salatin's editors let him indulge himself to this degree. And when he goes after "the tax-and-spend crowd [who] dishonor hardworking Americans" and "government manipulation of the housing market, by demanding that high-risk loans be made to unqualified people," Salatin is exposing a rather one-sided perspective on recent events. Again, how the editors thought these passages were a good way to advance his theme is just beyond me.

I can't count how many copies I've bought as gifts and replacements for those lent out and never returned, and I'll keep buying it and spreading it around. While I may not agree with everything that he does or how he chooses to do it (I'm way too OCD to build anything that's not perfectly plumb, level and square) there's no denying his passion, or his talent for story telling, and the story that he's telling definitely needs to reach a broader audience. Very much in the vein of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, but written with Joel's own unique kind of wit, and the wisdom of someone who has walked the walk for most of his life. Arguably one of the best advocates for a return to sensible values and rational, intentional living that we've seen in quite a while. I love all of his books, but this is the one that I prefer as an introduction to Salatin for the previously uninformed.

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