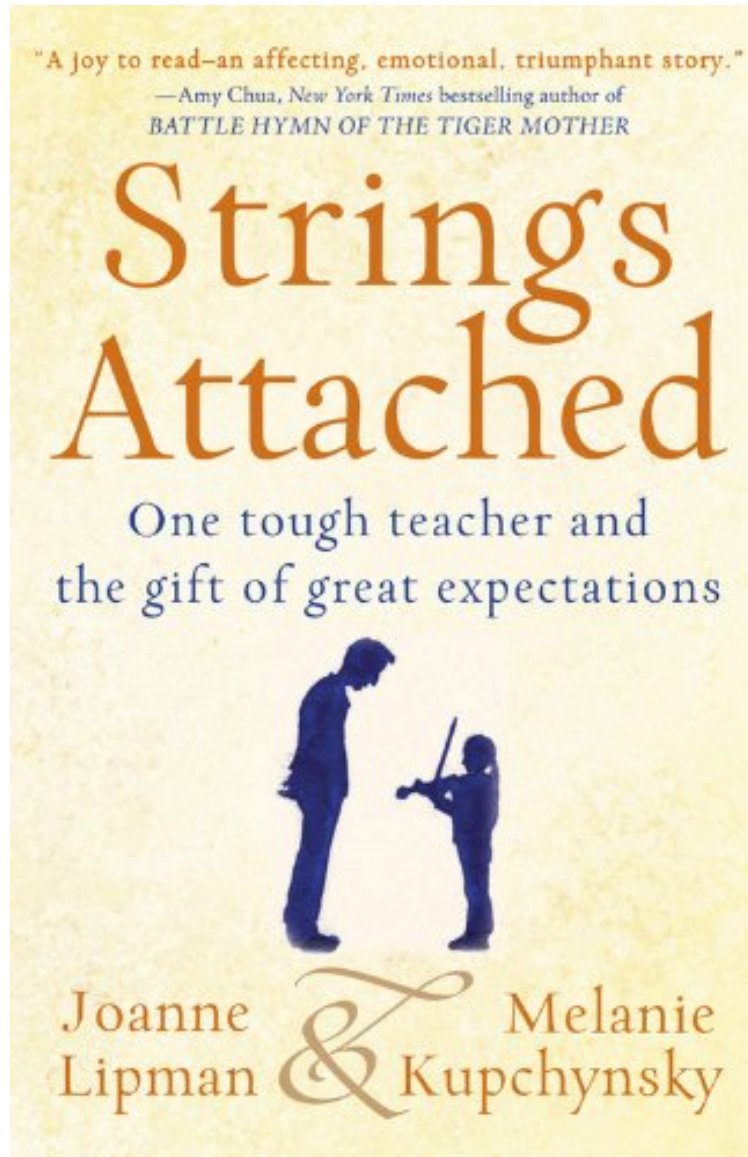


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## Strings Attached: One Tough Teacher and the Gift of Great Expectations

Joanne Lipman, Melanie Kupchynsky  
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**Joanne Lipman, Melanie Kupchynsky : Strings Attached: One Tough Teacher and the Gift of Great Expectations** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strings Attached: One Tough Teacher and the Gift of Great Expectations:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Must ReadBy Peter VogelLong before the world heard of "Tiger

Moms", there was Mr. K. Before "No Child Left Behind", there was Mr K. And before Jaime Escalante, there was Mr K. A man who believed that every child could succeed if they worked hard enough. A teacher who did not reward mere attempts or give faint praise. A man who knew that failure was a critical part of learning and that students grew by overcoming their failures. A man who inspired his students to work harder than they ever thought possible, simply to hear the words "not bad". An educator who knew that success was its own reward and devoted himself to his students success. Now we call it "tough love". Back then, it was just Mr K. Told alternately by his daughter, Melanie, and one of his former students, Joanne Lipman, *Strings Attached* is a loving, poignant, honest, often humorous portrait of the life of a teacher who survived multiple tragedies and who taught his students not only music, but also confidence, poise and how to succeed in life. *Strings Attached* is a must for teachers, parents, and even students. But if nothing else, it is a darn good read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "The gift of great expectations" By LPG While I loved this poignant co-memoir and practically inhaled it in one sitting, my one regret is that the two authors seemed to have the same homogenized voice which I attribute to overly intrusive editing. In other words, the alternating chapters by Melanie (Mr. K's prodigy daughter and for years a violinist with the Chicago Symphony) and Joanne (a viola student of Mr. K and, as an adult, a successful journalist) sound as if they were written by the same person. I would have liked Melanie's sections to have read less like those of a seasoned professional writer and more authentically like the efforts of a professional (albeit brilliant) musician. I want to highlight one sad and all too true insight from Joanne toward the end of the book. About her extraordinary teacher "who made us better than we had any right to be," she writes: "[Mr. K] was the toughest teacher we ever had. He could be downright mean. If he was teaching today, he wouldn't stand a chance. Parents would be outraged. They'd be calling and complaining. They'd yell at the principal if he singled out their kid for playing out of tune. They'd call a lawyer if he suggested their child was 'deaf' or an 'idiot.' Administrations would be pressured to fire him. Almost surely they would." As I said, sad and all too true. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "Gift" is right on By amusingphd I'm always wary when committing to reading this type of memoir. Is it going to turn into another self-indulgent, self-congratulatory journal that speaks to few readers, including me? Nothing to fear here. This is a very personal story, told in parallel, complimentary threads by two childhood friends. It's about humility, faith, perseverance, devotion, and love. I laughed and cried. Ultimately, I was inspired to renew my passion for my own life's work. This is a moving slice of life, told beautifully. It's going to make Christmas shopping much easier this year.

*STRINGS ATTACHED* is a powerful memoir about resilience in the face of unspeakable tragedy, an inspiring and poignant tale of how one man transformed his own heartache into a legacy of joy for his students. His students knew Jerry Kupchynsky as "Mr. K" - the fierce, foot-stomping Ukrainian-born music teacher who rehearsed them until their fingers almost bled, and who made them better than they had any right to be. Away from the classroom, though, life seemed to conspire against him at every turn. *STRINGS ATTACHED* takes you on his remarkable journey, from his childhood on the run in Nazi Germany, to his life in America caring for his disabled wife and their two young daughters, to his search for his younger daughter after she mysteriously disappears - a search that would last for seven years. His unforgettable story is lyrically told in alternating chapters by two childhood friends who reconnected decades later: journalist Joanne Lipman, his former student; and Chicago Symphony Orchestra violinist Melanie Kupchynsky, his daughter. Heartbreaking yet ultimately triumphant, *STRINGS ATTACHED* is a testament to the astonishing power of hope -- and a celebration of the profound influence one person can have on the lives of others.

From Publishers Weekly Part biography of a beloved teacher and father, part memoir, the book's central character, music teacher Jerry Mr. K Kupchynsky, looms larger than life on the page just as he did for journalist Lipman, one of Mr. K's violists, and Melanie, his elder daughter, now a violinist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His teaching methods are extreme: cracking the knuckle on a student's thumb to emphasize correct finger placement but glimpses of his family life soften his image. We learn about how Mr. K fled from both Nazis and Soviets in his native Ukraine during WWII, and about the stress he endured later in life when his wife was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The authors provide intimate details from their lives as well. Central to the book is Melanie's relationship with her younger sister, Stephanie. Lipman and Kupchynsky played together in a string quartet organized by Mr. K, of which Stephanie was also a part. In 1991, Stephanie disappeared from her apartment in upstate New York. The ensuing search, led by the Kupchynsky family and aided by Lipman, provides the mystery around which the reminiscences about Mr. K are organized. Though the book contains less educational philosophy than the foreword suggests, the authors' memories are more powerful for not being embellished with preachy conclusions. Photos. Agent: Suzanne Gluck, William Morris Endeavor. (Oct.) "This book makes me believe that one man can make a difference. The life and teachings of Jerry Kupchynsky, affectionately known as Mr K, certainly did for his daughter Melanie and her friend Joanne Lipman, and for legions of students whose lives were affected and changed by the powerful vision of this passionate, complex man. Even more importantly, this book reveals how music can become an anchor, a binding element for creating friendship and support during times of grief, illness and tragedy. By being inspired, the authors themselves become inspirational. Mr. K's work lives on, and we are all the richer for it." "Yo-Yo Ma" A joy to read--an affecting,

emotional, triumphant story." Amy Chua, Yale Law Professor and author of *BATTLE HYMN OF THE TIGER MOTHER* "Moving and motivating.... While tactics like [Mr. K's] may not have earned his students' immediate devotion, they never forgot him and often found they could achieve more than they ever dreamed.... A Must Read." Kirkus s, Starred "A very fine dual memoir.... For those who had a figure like Mr. K in their lives, *STRINGS ATTACHED* will resonate. Everyone else will wish they had been so lucky." *The New York Times Book About the Author* Joanne Lipman is one of the nation's most prominent journalists and commentators. She was a Deputy Managing Editor of *The Wall Street Journal* and she founded and was Editor-in-Chief of *Portfolio*. Currently, she is a *Newsweek* columnist and advisor to news organizations such as CNN and New York Public Radio. She is a frequent television commentator, appearing on CNN, CBS, and CNBC, among others. Melanie Kupchynsky has been a violinist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for more than 20 years, during which time the symphony has won 21 Grammys. She began studying violin at the age of four with her father and the subject of the book, Jerry "Mr. K" Kupchynsky. Melanie began her career with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra under the direction of John Williams. With the CSO, she has performed around the globe under the world's greatest conductors and with the world's most prominent soloists. She remains an active chamber musician as well, most recently performing as part of the Chicago Symphony's "Citizen Musician" outreach program in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and with Yo Yo Ma in Chicago.