Then Again

by

Diane Keaton
Mom loved adages, quotes, slogans. There were always little reminders pasted on the kitchen wall. For example, the word THINK. I found THINK thumbtacked on a bulletin board in her darkroom. I saw it Scotch-taped on a pencil box she’d collaged. I even found a pamphlet titled THINK on her bedside table. Mom liked to THINK. So begins Diane Keaton’s unforgettable memoir about her mother and herself. In it you will meet the woman known to tens of millions as Annie Hall, but you will also meet, and fall in love with, her mother, the loving, complicated, always-thinking Dorothy Hall. To write about herself, Diane realized she had to write about her mother, too, and how their bond came to define both their lives. In a remarkable act of creation, Diane not only reveals herself to us, she also lets us meet in intimate detail her mother. Over the course of her life, Dorothy kept eighty-five journals—literally thousands of pages—in which she wrote about her marriage, her children, and, most probingly, herself. Dorothy also recorded memorable stories about Diane’s grandparents. Diane has sorted through these pages to paint an unflinching portrait of her mother—a woman restless with intellectual and creative energy, struggling to find an outlet for her talents—as well as her entire family, recounting a story that spans four generations and nearly a hundred years. More than the autobiography of a legendary actress, Then Again is a book about a very American family with very American dreams. Diane will remind you of yourself, and her bonds with her family will remind you of your own relationships with those you love the most. Look for special features inside. Join the Circle for author chats and more.
I always say my life is this family, and that’s the truth.

Dorothy Deanne Keaton Hall

THINK

Mom loved adages, quotes, slogans. There were always little reminders pasted on the kitchen wall. For example, the word THINK. I found THINK thumbtacked on a bulletin board in her darkroom. I saw it Scotch-taped on a pencil box she’d collaged. I even found a pamphlet titled THINK on her bedside table. Mom liked to THINK. In a notebook she wrote, I’m reading Tom Robbins’s book Even Cowgirls Get the Blues. The passage about marriage ties in with women’s struggle for accomplishment. I’m writing this down for future THINKING … She followed with a Robbins quote: “For most poor dumb brainwashed women marriage is the climactic experience. For men, marriage is a matter of efficient logistics: the male gets his food, bed, laundry, TV … offspring and creature comforts all under one roof…. But for a woman, marriage is surrender. Marriage is when a girl gives up the fight … and from then on leaves the truly interesting and significant action to her husband, who has bargained to ‘take care’ of her…. Women live longer than men because they really haven’t been living.” Mom liked to THINK about life, especially the experience of being a woman. She liked to write about it too.

In the mid-seventies on a visit home, I was printing some photographs I’d taken of Atlantic City in Mother’s darkroom when I found something I’d never seen. It was some kind of, I don’t know, sketchbook. On the cover was a collage she’d made out of family photographs with the words It’s the Journey
That Counts, Not the Arrival. I picked it up and flipped through the pages. Although it included several collages made from snapshots and magazine cutouts, it was filled with page after page of writing.

Had a productive day at Hunter's Bookstore. We rearranged the art section and discovered many interesting books hidden away. It's been two weeks since I was hired. I make 3 dollars and thirty-five cents an hour. Today I got paid 89 dollars in total.

This wasn't one of Mom's typical scrapbooks, with the usual napkins from Clifton's Cafeteria, old black-and-white photographs, and my less-than-thrilling report cards. This was a journal. An entry dated August 2, 1976, read: WATCH OUT ON THIS PAGE. For you, the possible reader in the future, this takes courage. I'm speaking of what is on my mind. I am angry. Target—Jack—bad names, those he has flung at me—NOT forgotten and that is undoubtedly the problem—"You frigin' bastard"—all said—all felt. God, who the hell does he think he is? That was it for me. This was raw, too raw. I didn't want to know about an aspect of Mother and Father's life that could shatter my perception of their love. I put it down, walked out of the darkroom, and did not open another one of her eighty-five journals until she died some thirty years later. But, of course, no matter how hard I tried to deny their presence, I couldn't help but see them resting on bookshelves, or placed underneath the telephone, or even staring up at me from inside a kitchen drawer. One time I began looking through Mom's new Georgia O'Keeffe One Hundred Flowers picture book on the coffee table, only to find a journal titled Who Says You Haven't Got a Chance? lying underneath. It was as if they were conspiring, "Pick us up, Diane. Pick us up." Forget it. There was no way I was going to go through that experience again. But I was impressed with Mom's tenacity. How could she keep writing without an audience, not even her own family? She just did. She wrote about going back to school at age forty. She wrote about being a teacher. She wrote about every stray cat she rescued. When her sister Marti got skin cancer and lost most of her nose, she wrote about that too. She wrote about her frustrations with aging. When Dad got sick in 1990, her journal raged at the injustice of the cancer that attacked his brain. The documentation of his passing proved to be some of Mom's finest reporting. It was as if taking care of Jack made her love him in a way that helped her become the person she always wished she could have been.

I was trying to get Jack to eat today. But he couldn't. After a while, I took off my glasses. I put my head close to his, and I told him, I whispered to him, that I missed him. I started to cry. I didn't want him to see, so I turned my head away. And Jack, with what little strength remained in that damn body of his, took a napkin from my pocket and slowly, as with everything he did, slowly, so slowly, he looked at me with those piercing blue eyes and wiped the tears away from my face. "We'll make it through this, Dorothy." He didn't. In the end, Mom took care of Dad, just as she had taken care of Randy, Robin, Dorrie, and me—all our lives. But who was there for her when she wrote in a shaky hand: June 1993. This is the day I heard I have the beginning of Alzheimer's disease. Scary. Thus began a fifteen-year battle against the loss of memory. She kept writing. When she could no longer write paragraphs, she wrote sentences like Would we hurt each other less if we touched each other more? and Honor thyself. And short questions and statements like Quick. What's today's date? Or odd things like My head is taking a turn. When she couldn't write
sentences, she wrote words: RENT. CALL. FLOWERS. CAR. And even her favorite word, THINK.

When she ran out of words, she wrote numbers, until she couldn’t write anymore.

Dorothy Deanne Keaton was born in Winfield, Kansas, in 1921. Her parents, Beulah and Roy, drifted into California before she was three. They were heartlanders in search of the big dream. It dumped them into the hills of Pasadena. Mom played the piano and sang in a trio called Two Dots and a Dash at her high school. She was sixteen when her father drove off, leaving Beulah and her three daughters to fend for themselves. It was hard times for the Keaton girls in the late thirties. Beulah, who’d never worked a day in her life, had to find a job. Dorothy gave up her college dreams in order to help around the house until Beulah finally found work as a janitor.

I have a photograph of sixteen-year-old Dorothy standing next to her father, Roy Keaton. Why did he leave his favorite daughter, his look-alike; why? How could he have driven away knowing he would forever break some part of her heart?

Everything changed when Dorothy met Jack Hall on a basketball court at Los Angeles Pacific College in Highland Park. Mom loved to recall how this handsome black-haired, blue-eyed young man had come to meet her sister Martha but only had eyes for her. She would laugh and say, “It was love at first sight.” And it must have been, because not long after that, they eloped in Las Vegas at the Stardust Hotel.

Mother never told me of her dreams for herself. There were hints though. She was president of the PTA as well as the Arroyo Vista Ladies Club. She was a Sunday-school teacher at our Free Methodist church. She entered every contest on the back of every cereal box. She loved game shows. Our favorite was Queen for a Day, emceed by Jack Bailey, who began each episode, five days a week, with “Would YOU like to be … QUEEN … FOR … A … DAY?” The game went like this: Bailey interviewed four women; whoever was in the worst shape—assessed by the audience applause meter—was crowned Queen for a Day. With “Pomp and Circumstance” playing, he would wrap the winner in a velvet cape with a white fur collar, place a sparkling tiara on her head, and give her four dozen red coronation roses from Carl’s of Hollywood. Mom and Auntie Martha wrote their sad stories on the application sheet more than once. She almost made the cut when she wrote, “My husband needs a lung.” When pressed for details, Mom told the truth—well, sort of. Jack Hall, an ardent skin diver, needed to dive deeper in order to put more food on his family’s plates. Mom was eliminated.

One morning I woke up to a group of strangers walking around our house examining every room. Mom hadn’t bothered to tell us she had entered the Mrs. America contest at our local level. Mrs. America was a pageant devoted to finding the ideal homemaker. Later she informed us kids it was a competition of skills that included table-setting, floral-arranging, bed-making, and cooking, as well as managing the family budget and excelling in personal grooming. All we could think was WOW.

I was nine, so that made me old enough to sit in the audience of the movie theater on Figueroa Street when she was crowned Mrs. Highland Park. Suddenly my mother, the new greatest homemaker in Highland Park, stood high above me on a vast stage in front of a huge red velvet curtain. When the drapery opened to reveal an RCA Victor Shelby television, a Philco washer and dryer, a set of Samsonite luggage, a fashion wardrobe from Ivers Department Store, and six cobalt-blue flasks filled with Evening in Paris perfume, I wasn’t sure
what I was looking at. What was I seeing? Why was Mom standing in the spotlight like she was some sort of movie star? This was terribly exciting yet extremely unpleasant at the same time. Something had happened, a kind of betrayal. Mom had abandoned me, but, even worse, much worse, I secretly wished it would have been me on that stage, not her.

Six months later Dorothy Hall was crowned again, this time as Mrs. Los Angeles by Art Linkletter at the Ambassador Hotel. My brother, Randy, and I watched on the new RCA Victor Shelby television. Her duties as Mrs. Los Angeles included making local appearances at supermarkets, department stores, and ladies' clubs all over Los Angeles County. She wasn't home much, and when she was, she was busy baking the same German chocolate cake with walnuts over and over, in hopes she would be crowned Mrs. California. Dad got sick of the whole ordeal and made it known. When she lost the coveted title of Mrs. California, she appeared to accept her failure as easily as she resumed her normal household duties, but things were different, at least for me.

Sometimes I wonder how our lives might have changed if Mother had been chosen Mrs. America. Would she have become a TV personality like Bess Myerson, or a spokesperson for Philco appliances, or a columnist for McCall's magazine? What would have happened to my dreams of being in the spotlight if hers had been realized? Another mother took her opportunity away, but I didn't care; I was glad I didn't have to share her with a larger world.

Mom believed her kids would have brilliant futures. After all, I was funny. Randy wrote poems. Robin sang, and Dorrie was smart. By the time I was in junior high school, enough C-minuses had accumulated to prove I wasn't going to be a student with a brilliant future. Like the rest of the nation, I was tested for my intelligence in 1957. The results were not surprising. There was one exception, something called Abstract Reasoning. I couldn't wait to run home and tell Mom about this Abstract Reasoning thing. What was it? Excited by any accomplishment, she told me abstract reasoning was the ability to analyze information and solve problems on a complex, thought-based level. No matter how hard I've tried to figure out answers to problems by thinking them through, I still don't exactly understand what abstract reasoning means.

In 1959 our family's cultural outlook changed when the Bastendorfs moved next door. Bill was a psychologist, with a PhD. Dad, in particular, didn't trust “headshrinkers.” But he couldn't help liking Bill and his wife, Laurel, who caused a stir in the community because they let their children run around naked. On our street of look-alike tract homes framed with nicely mowed lawns, the neighbors did not take to the Bastendorfs' jungle or their walls filled with posters of works by Picasso and Braque and Miró too. Sometimes Laurel would drive Mom to the only beatnik café in Santa Ana. Once there, they drank espresso coffee and talked about the latest Sunset magazine article on trendsetters like Charles Eames or Cliff May—something like that. All I know is, Mom ate it up, especially when Laurel showed her how to make shellboards. She was so inspired, she created her own hybrid—the Rockboard. Soon they were all over our house. The one I remember most was at least three by five feet and weighed so much that some of the rocks started to fall off. Even though most people saw Dorothy as a housewife, I saw an artist struggling to find a medium.

Inspired by the Bastendorfs' example, in 1961 Mom piled us kids into the family station wagon and drove all the way to New
York City to see the Art of Assemblage exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. We were bowled over by Joseph Cornell and how he navigated an imaginary world through his boxes and collages. As soon as we got home, I decided to collage my entire bedroom wall. Mom was way into it, adding pictures from magazines she thought I might like, such as James Dean standing in Times Square. Soon she was collaging almost anything, including collage trash cans and collage storage boxes made with lumpy papier-mâché; she even collaged the inside of all the kitchen cabinets. (Don't ask.) Randy took it to a new level by becoming an actual collage artist. Even today, literally hundreds of his current series, "Stymied by a Woman's Face," are stacked in the oven, where he claims they're safe. I guess you could say collecting and reworking images, reorganizing the familiar into unexpected patterns in hopes of discovering something new, became one of our shared beliefs. Collage, like abstract reasoning, was a visual process for analyzing information. "Right?" as I always asked Mom when I was young. For sure she thought I was right.

I was fourteen when I started lugging around a memory I'll never let go. Mom and Dad were dancing in the moonlight on a hill in Ensenada, Mexico. A mariachi band played. I watched from the sidelines, as they kissed with a depth of feeling that should have been embarrassing for a teenage daughter. Instead, it filled me with awe. It even gave me something else to believe in. Their love. By lodging myself in the arms of Mother and Father's romance, I knew there would be no goodbyes.

On the last page of my teenage diary, I wrote: "To whom it may concern. When I get married I want my husband and I to talk serious matters over together. No emotional breakdowns in front of the kids. No swearing. I don't want my husband to smoke, but he can enjoy a good drink now and then. I want my children to go to Sunday school every Sunday. They will also get spankings, since I believe in them. In fact, I want my husband and I to run the household the same way Mom and Dad do right now." "To whom it may concern"? Who was I kidding? And why was I trying to be such a good girl when what I really felt had nothing to do with pretend rules on a subject I was terrified of? This is what I didn't write down but have never forgotten.

Dave Garland and I were passing notes in Mrs. Hopkins's ninth-grade algebra class one day. Dave was "really neat," but he "couldn't stand me." He ended our exchange with six words: "You'll make a good wife someday." A wife? I didn't want to be a wife. I wanted to be a hot date, someone to make out with. I wanted to be Barbra Streisand singing, "Never, never will I marry; born to wander till I'm dead." I never did marry. I never "went steady" either. While I dutifully continued to please my parents, my head was in the clouds, kissing unattainable greats like Dave Garland. I figured the only way to realize my number-one dream of becoming an actual Broadway musical comedy star was to remain an adoring daughter. Loving a man, and becoming a wife, would have to be put aside. So I continued to pursue unattainable greats. The names changed, from Dave to Woody, then Warren, and finally Al. Could I have made a lasting commitment to them? Hard to say. Subconsciously I must have known it could never work, and because of this they'd never get in the way of my achieving my dreams. You see, I was looking for bigger fish to fry. I was looking for an audience. Any audience. So what did I do? I auditioned for everything available while mastering nothing in particular. I was in the church choir and the...
school chorus. I tried out for cheerleader and pom-pom girl. I auditioned for every talent show and every play, including The Taming of the Shrew, which I didn't understand. I was a class debater and editor of the YWCA's newsletter. I ran for ninth-grade secretary. I even begged Mom to please help get me into Job's Daughters, a Masonic-sponsored secret club where girls in a pageantlike atmosphere paraded around in long gowns. I wanted to be adored, so I chose to stay safe in the arms of Jack and Dorothy; at least, that's what I thought.

Now that I'm in my sixties, I want to understand more about what it felt like to be the beautiful wife of Jack Hall, raising four children in sunny California. I want to know why Mother continually forgot to remember how wonderful she was. I wish she would have taken pride in how much fun it was for us to hear her play "My Mammy" on the piano and sing, "The sun shines east, the sun shines west, I know where the sun shines best—Mammy." I don't know why she didn't appreciate how unusual it was when she took me to a room in a museum where a marble lion was missing the right side of his face; he also had no feet. The towering goddess in the other room had no arms.

Mom was oohing and aahing, "Diane, isn't it beautiful?" "But everything's lost. They don't have their parts," I said. "But don't you see? Even without all their parts, look how magnificent they are." She was teaching me how to see. Yet she never took credit for anything. I wonder if her lack of self-esteem was an early symptom of forgetting. Was it really Alzheimer's that stole her memory, or was it a crippling sense of insecurity?

For fifteen years Mother kept saying goodbye: goodbye to names of places; goodbye to her famous tuna casseroles; goodbye to the BMW Dad bought her on her sixty-first birthday; goodbye to recognizing me as her daughter. Hello to Purina cat food molding on paper plates in her medicine chest; hello to caregivers; hello to the wheelchair guiding her to her favorite show—Barney—every morning on PBS; hello to the blank stare.

Somewhere in the middle of the horrible hellos and tragic goodbyes, I adopted a baby girl. I was fifty. After a lifetime of avoiding intimacy, suddenly I got intimate in a big way. As Mother struggled to complete sentences, I watched Dexter, my daughter, and a few years later little Duke, my son, begin to form words as a means to capture the wonder of their developing minds.

The state of being a woman in between two loves—one as a daughter, the other as a mother—has changed me. It's been a challenge to witness the betrayal of such a cruel disease while learning to give love with the promise of stability. If my mother was the most important person to me, if I am who and how I am largely due to who and how she was, what then does that say about my impact on Duke and Dexter? Abstract reasoning is no help.

At the beginning of her last year, Dorothy's small circle of devoted friends had all but fallen away. The people who loved her could be counted on one hand. It was hard to recognize the woman we had known. But then, am I recognizable as the same person I was when Annie Hall opened almost thirty-five years ago? I remember people coming up to me on the street, saying, "Don't ever change. Just don't ever change." Even Mom once said, "Don't grow old, Diane." I didn't like those words then, and I don't like them now. The exhausting effort to control time by altering the effects of age doesn't bring happiness. There's a word for you: happiness. Why is happiness something I thought I was entitled to? What is happiness anyway? Insensitivity. That's what Tennessee Williams
said. Mom's last word was no. No to the endless prodding. No to the unasked-for invasions. No to
"Dinner, Dorothy?" "Time for your pills. Open your mouth." "We're going to roll you over,
Mamacita." "NO!" "Let me get you a straw. Let me get you a fork." "NO." "Let me rub your shoulders." "No, no, no, no,
NO!!!!" If she could, Mom would have said, "Leave me and my body alone, for God's sake. Don't
touch me. This is my life. This is my ending." It wasn't that the activities were administered
without affection and care; that wasn't the issue. The issue was independence. When I was a kid
Mom would retreat to any unoccupied room with a longing that overshadowed her all-
encompassing love for us. Once there, she would put aside the role of devoted mother, loving
wife, and take refuge in her thoughts. In the end, no was all that was left of Dorothy's desire to
have her wishes respected."

"Finally freed from the constraints of this life, Mom has joined Dad—
just as she has joined her sisters, Orpha and Martha; her mother, Beulah; and all her dear cats,
starting with Charcoal, ending with Cyrus. I promise to take care of her thoughts and words. I
promise to THINK. And I promise to carry the legacy of beautiful, beautiful Dorothy Deanne
Keaton Hall from Kansas, born on October thirty-first, 1921—my mother." I spoke these words at
her memorial service in November 2008. Mom continues to be the most important, influential
person in my life. From the outside looking in, we lived completely different lives. She was a
housewife and mother who dreamed of success; I am an actress whose life has been—in some
respects—beyond my wildest dreams. Comparing two women with big dreams who shared
many of the same conflicts and also happened to be mother and daughter is partially a story of
what's lost in success contrasted with what's gained in accepting an ordinary life. I was an
ordinary girl who became an ordinary woman, with one exception: Mother gave me extraordinary
will. It didn't come free. But, then, life wasn't a free ride for Mother either."

So why did I write a memoir? Because Mom lingers; because she tried to save our family's history through her
words; because it took decades before I recognized that her most alluring trait was her
complexity; because I don't want her to disappear even though she has. So many reasons, but
the best answer comes from a passage she wrote using those fine abstract-reasoning
capabilities she passed on to me. The year was 1980. She was fifty-nine.

"Every living person should be forced to write an autobiography. They should have to go back and unravel and
disclose all the stuff that was packed into their lives. Finding the unusual way authors put ideas
into words gives me a very satisfying knowledge that I could do this too if I focused on it. It might
help me release the pressure I feel from stored up memories that are affecting me now. But I do
something terribly wrong. I tell myself I'm too controlled by my past habits. I really want to write
about my life, the close friends I knew, the family life we had, but I hold back. If I would be totally
honest, I think I could reach a point where I'd begin seeing ME in a more understandable light.
Now I'm jumpy in my recollected thought, yet I know it would be nothing but good for me to do
this."

I wish she had. And, because she didn't, I've written not my memoir but ours. The story of a
girl whose wishes came true because of her mother is not new, but it's mine. The profound love
and gratitude I feel now that she's left has compelled me to try to "unravel" the mystery of her
journey. In so doing I hoped to find the meaning of our relationship and understand why realized dreams are such a strange burden. What I've done is create a book that combines my own memories and stories with Mom's notebooks and journals. Thinking back to her scrapbooks and our mutual love of collage, I've placed her words beside mine, along with letters, clippings, and other materials that document not just our lives but our bond. I want to hold my life up alongside hers in order to, as she wrote, reach a point where I begin to see me—and her—in a more understandable light.
What people say about this book

Melissa H. Byers, “A Mother and Child Reunion. As a longtime fan of Diane Keaton, I was anxious to read her story. What I found was different from what I expected. In Then Again, Keaton juxtaposes her story with that of her mother Dorothy. She moves between her mother’s journal entries to events in her own life and contemplates the connections and differences in their lives. It is a charming conceit, but it doesn't always work. Sometimes the segue is smooth, but occasionally it jars. And while Keaton is at least somewhat forthcoming in her own story, I was still left feeling a distance. She writes much the way she speaks, which sometimes leaves a reader at a loss to understand what, exactly, she is saying. Overall, however, I highly recommend the book. The touching memories of her mother, the discoveries of a grown child about a beloved parent, and how we carry lessons learned into our own parenting are well worth the reading.”

Shirley H. Showalter, “Great for Fans of Diane Keaton and Memoir: See How She Creates a Collage of Memory. My reaction went from hot to cold and back again numerous times throughout this book. Keaton is so honest with the reader and with herself that she risks the same thing in print that she risks on screen: appearing to be unfocused and uncentered. This “ditsy” persona makes for great comedy, where it can provide relief from characters who are more intellectual or materialistic than she is. But in real life, we want to know what wisdom a woman in her sixties might have gleaned from a life in show business and the arts. Sometimes it's there. Keaton shows a remarkable capacity for appreciating her sometimes difficult family, especially her mother, who obviously loved her and whose journals provide part of the book's substance. We see fierce love combined with some narcissism and unfulfilled dreams on the mother's part and the same love and yet strong need to be independent on the daughter's part. As Keaton says, "Our story, Mother's and mine, will always and forever be hidden in a past that can't be untangled by looking through a parade of clippings recording the journey of a young woman who became Annie Hall." p. 77. A psychiatrist would have a lot to probe there. When Keaton fights for her own aesthetic judgment as in when she wants a black and white Vogue cover, we admire her determination and willingness to sacrifice for her beliefs. The most courageous thing she does is to adopt two children as an older, single, woman. Her love for those children permeates the latter part of the book. I enjoyed the photography throughout the book and recommend the book to two groups: Diane Keaton fans, and memoir lovers. The "collage" approach to memoir will not be everyone's cup of tea, but it seems to fit the enigmatic, idiosyncratic, creative and intelligent young woman who did a lot more than become Annie Hall.”

The Schoolmarm, “Diane Keaton, an interesting journey, so far.. I read the book out of curiosity about the movie actress, "Annie Hall" and her association with Woody Allen, and the Hollywood lifestyle in general. I found it to be compelling in her devotion to her mother, her adopted
children and in her own insecurities. I felt it was sincere and honest in many ways regarding how it is to be aging in a business that requires smooth skin and youth. She has had a more diverse life than I realized. I enjoyed reading about her and wish her well.”

Mary Lois Adshead, “A Gifted Friend I Never Met. Diane Keaton has my heart, as she has had when I first saw her as Annie Hall, and her book does not disappoint. She is, like the character Woody Allen created for her, mercurial and confounding, and in her memoir we get a peek at why. Her family, striving to fit the all-American mold, had secrets, sorrows, and success in a uniquely post-war American way, and Diane, the first-born, sought to understand at the same time she overtly undermined her every decision and choice. She's an intelligent, good writer. She had a very close relationship with her mother, who emerges as enigmatic even though Ms. Keaton includes great portions of the journals she kept. I like the Diane I meet here. She is like one of those gifted friends one keeps around for laughs and exploration and wonder. Even though sometimes the wonder is, what exactly do I like about this person? Then once again she surprises us with something like SOMETHING’S GOTTA GIVE, a movie that captures her talent perfectly, or a book like THEN AGAIN.”

Ebook Tops Reader, “What a delight. Finding out some things about Diane Hall aka Diane Keaton were surprising. Finding out who she was is a joy. She is so much like all of us. If you were hoping for a tell all book, dishing dirt this is not for you. This book is about family, love and genuine friends. It is down to earth and self-critical. Thank you for letting us know your mother and your family. A welcome respite from the world’s continuous darkness. Bravo Ms. Keaton.”

Mr. Larry S. Ledford, “Learning From Your Mother. Diane Keaton learned a lot from her mother; some from her Mother's zest for life and some from the desperation of watching her fade away into the fog of Alzheimer's. "Then Again" is not your usual Hollywood memoir; it puts the star's career in the back seat and lets her mother's journals and art take the lead. There are generous recollections of her working and personal relationships with Woody Allen, Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson (among others), but what stays with the reader is her deep, abiding love for her mother, Dorothy. There are memorable questions and realizations...Dorothy's and her own....that are indelible. Many will stay with the reader for a very long time. Keaton writes "Growing old has made me appreciate things I wouldn't have expected to enjoy, like hold Mother's hand and trying to smooth out the folds of skin." And......."In a way growing old could be like -- the ride on the Hurricane Harbor roller coaster, the ride of a lifetime." But the two excerpts that will stay with me forever in "Then Again" a unique memoir; one that is joyous and sad in one big sigh of recognition and realization. But "then again"......when encountering Diane Keaton one should expect to be
Alison Petrie, “What really matters!. Diane Keaton has caught up with me as an actress. At first, I wasn't quite sure but, over the years, she always delivers a sensitive performance that captures both laughter and tears, "The Family Stone" being a good example. In “Then Again" she interperses her life with constant reference to her mother and the diaries that her mother kept. Given that Diane Keaton has been working in Hollywood since the early 70s, this could have been a typical "star read" but instead it reflects on what matters in life - love, family and caring. Yes, she had the Hollywood romances with people such as Warren Beatty and Al Pacino, but she is respectful of the relationships and it is obvious from reading the book, that she values every relationship she has ever had, not something all of us can say.”

XCHARLYBX, “great read. Love this book, very quirky and with heart, enjoyed reading this book, highly recommend if you're a fan of Diane Keaton"

artmakesmehappy, “Wonderful read. I don't normally go for celebrity autobiography but this is an exception. I admire Diane Keaton and she doesn't disappoint. At the heart of it is her relationship with her mother which she uses as the springboard to talk about all of her life. I love how she used her mother’s diaries juxtaposed with her own life. She strikes me as an authentic person and this book proves that. You can tell there was no ghost writer - it is her own voice. She doesn’t resort to the lowest common denominator. It was entertaining but also dealt with universal truths we all must face at some time and in our own way.”