A field guide to “closer to the ground” parenting

Now in paperback, with recipes kids will love, Dylan Tomine’s masterfully written memoir inspires families to make memories through nature, cooking and food

Closer to the Ground by Dylan Tomine

When outdoor writer and conservation advocate Dylan Tomine saw two teenagers texting on a couch—to each other—he decided to establish a different life for his children: more unplugged, more in tune with the rhythms of tide, weather and season. Less screen time, more fishing, oyster-shucking and gardening. The Tomines left their Seattle high-rise for a house in the woods on an island in Puget Sound where they learned to live a life more wild—searching for firewood, oysters and mushrooms.

In his highly-acclaimed memoir Closer to the Ground: An Outdoor Family’s Year on the Water, In the Woods and at the Table, Tomine writes about a father learning to share his love of nature with his kids, then ages three and six. The book takes readers on foraging, cooking and eating adventures across four seasons of a single year.

Now in paperback with 30 percent new content, the second edition of Closer to the Ground features beautiful full-color photos and tried-and-true family recipes that focus on natural flavors and simple preparations, like Easy Chanterelle Pizza, Mom’s Blackberry Pie, Vine-Maple Smoked Salmon, Crispy Panko Razor Clams, Summer Strawberry Ice Cream and Cucumber Sunomono Salad.

Closer to the Ground encourages us to think about our relationship with nature, but in an accessible way. “It’s about regular people trying to live a little closer to nature—especially through the process of food—with their kids,” says Tomine.

Together, the Tomine family hunts chanterelles, fishes for salmon, digs clams and gathers at the kitchen table (mouths watering) to enjoy the fruits of their labor. A surprising result of their fishing and foraging life: the kids see healthy food, like salmon and homegrown vegetables, as delicious treats.

It also carries a timely message, addressing the growing interest in local food, childhood “nature deficit disorder,” conservation of natural resources, and the general desire to live in closer contact with the earth. It explores a more personal side of subjects covered in The Omnivore’s Dilemma, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle and Last Child In The Woods.

Patagonia founder and owner Yvon Chouinard says, “You can see in Dylan’s kids, the more time they spend foraging and fishing with their dad, just how different their relation is to the food they eat, and how they develop a confidence anyone of any age could envy.”
About the Author

Dylan Tomine, formerly a fly-fishing guide, now spends his days and nights as a writer, conservation advocate, fish bum and father, not necessarily in that order. His writing has appeared in The Flyfish Journal, The Drake, GolfWeek, The New York Times and numerous other publications. Dylan also serves as a trustee with the Wild Steelhead Coalition, and an ambassador for Patagonia and Patagonia Provisions. He lives with his family on an island in the Puget Sound.

Praise

“...Tomine expresses peace, gratitude, and satisfaction with life and Mother Nature in an homage reminiscent of Noel Perrin’s ruminations on the pleasures of the simple life... While Tomine’s memoir is decidedly food-focused (particularly food specific to the Pacific Northwest), he also shares thoughts on matters large and small, whether the many uses of plastic buckets or the trade-offs that must be made in choosing a budget-friendly sustainable lifestyle. That their lifestyle creates quality time for the family is evident from a conversation with his daughter and sweet moments in the woods with his son.” —Publishers Weekly

“...an eloquent chronicle of a likable family's attempt to live a more nature-centric life...Tomine writes with respect and humor...refreshingly unsanctimonious...a lovely homage to the oldest seductress around: Mother Nature.”
—The Washington Post

“This is some of the most evocative, mouthwatering food writing I’ve ever read… The strength of the book, of course, is that, like Tomine, it leads by example. It's a paean to eating (and drinking) locally without ever being preachy.”
—Outside

“Dylan Tomine’s Closer to the Ground is a pleasure to read, depicting as it does the days and seasons of a family intent on living joyfully, and providing at the same time a lively meditation on our relationship to nature. I found its buoyant, irrepressible, self-deprecating tone entirely winning, and was drawn in, happily, from page one.” —David Guterson, author of Snow Falling on Cedars

“Tomine weaves his memoir with lyrical passages, family dialogues and accounts of gathering shellfish and chanterelles—as well as delicious descriptions of cooking them—in an engaging, slightly self-deprecating tone... Closer to the Ground inspires readers to examine their own daily lives and rediscover their surroundings.” —Shelf Awareness

“...lush and visceral...Tomine finds a middle way, a way for regular people to live a little more consciously in a world that underpins the contrails and Twitter feeds of our twenty-first-century civilization.” —Orion

Media Contact: Stephanie Ridge, 512-481-7681, stephanie@prbythebook.com